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ABSTRACT

This book provides a sequential program to explore and develop communication skills about their own feelings and behaviors. Designed for use in grades 3-8, activities can be adapted to fit specific needs and audiences. The book is divided into two parts. Part 1, "Introduction," includes: (1) "Important Feelings Concepts"; (2) "Where do Feelings Come From?"; (3) "The Emotional Operating Systems"; (4) "Changing Responses to Feelings"; (5) "Repressing Feelings"; (6) "Feelings and Stress"; and (7) "Understanding, Managing and Learning from Feelings." Part 2, "Activities," contains: (1) "The Active Listener"; (2) "Communication Counts"; (3) "Say What You Mean"; (4) "Don't Say 'You,' Say 'I'"; (5) "Don't Say 'You'--Say 'I'"; (6) "What's Your Style?"; (7) "Should I, or Shouldn't I?"; (8) "The Write Stuff"; (9) "A Vocabulary of Feelings"; (10) "A Time I Remember Feelings"; (11) "Feel Your Feelings"; (12) "Pantomime a Feeling"; (13) "Feelings and Your Body"; (14) "The 'Feeling' of Poetry"; (15) "Tune In to Your Feelings"; (16) "Painting Our Feelings"; (17) "Magic Glasses"; (18) "Be Happy!"; (19) "The Keys to Happiness"; (20) "What's on My Mind"; (21) "The Land Remembers"; (22) "What Good Are Feelings?"; (23) "That's Unfair!"; (24) "Developing Responsible Feelings"; (25) "Take Responsibility for Your Feelings!"; (26) "Positive vs. Negative"; (27) "One of the Scariest Things That Ever Happened to Me"; (28) "We All Have Fears"; (29) "Rational Fears vs. Irrational Fears"; (30) "Fear Is a Monster"; (31) "Fear Busters"; (32) "Sequencing Anger"; (33) "Personal Anger Scale"; (34) "Let's Make Up"; (35) "Make It Better Letter"; (36) "First Feelings"; (37) "Dealing with Anger"; (38) "What's Your Bag of Tricks?"; and (39) "Literature Connection." (EH)

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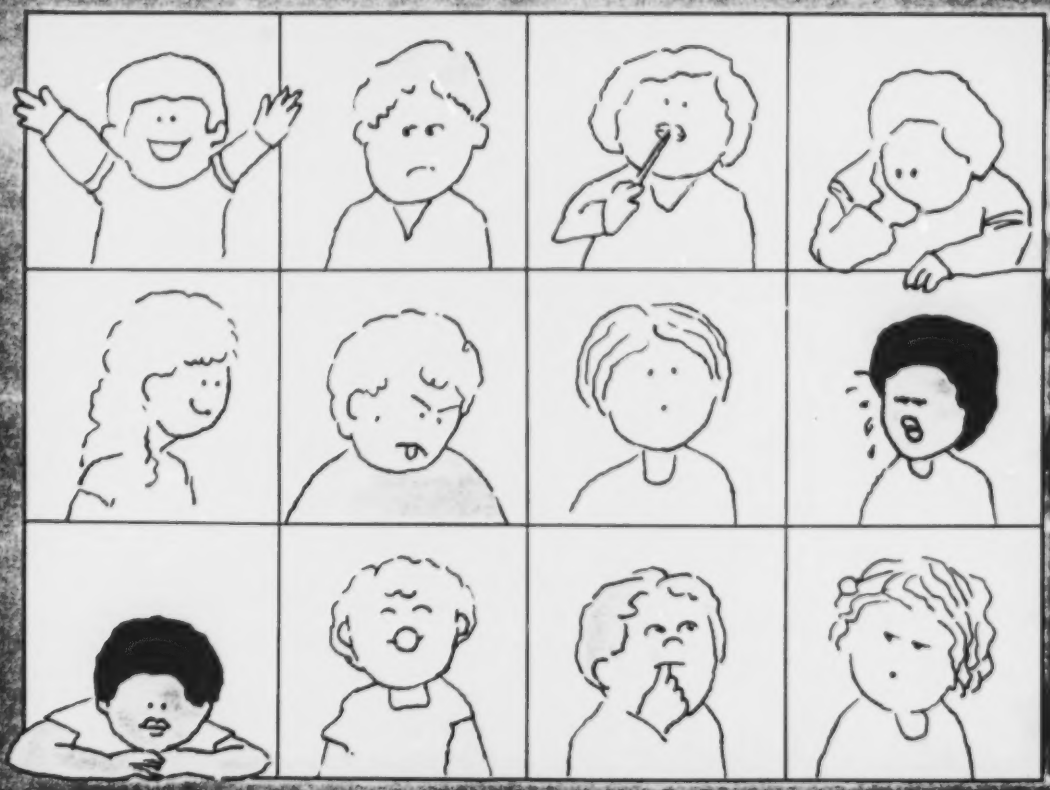
Feelings Are Facts

Helping Kids Understand, Manage, and Learn From Their Feelings



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Helping Kids Understand, Manage, and Learn From Their Feelings

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How To Use This Book

Ideally, *Feelings Are Facts* should be implemented as a sequential program of study. For this reason, activities are arranged in a recommended order of use. However, the book may also be regarded as a general resource of ideas and activities to help students understand and manage the range of feelings they experience on a day-to-day basis.

The first group of activities in *Feelings Are Facts* lays a foundation of basic communication skills. These skills provide students the means to effectively communicate their feelings to others. The next group of activities offers students opportunities to explore a wide range of feelings and emotions and to look at the many and varied ways in which feelings can be experienced and expressed. A number of activities deal with specific feelings such as happiness or grief. The last series of activities addresses two potentially difficult emotions that demand more in-depth focus: fear and anger. Through understanding and effective management skills, much of the unhappiness, upset, and conflict associated with these feelings can be reduced or avoided.

All of the activities in *Feelings Are Facts* are designed for use with students in grades 3 through 8, whether in counseling, classroom, or youth-group situations. Since the authors are committed to individualized instruction, no grade-level designations are provided. Please select and/or adapt activities in accordance with the abilities, interests, and needs of your students.

As students complete the activities in *Feelings Are Facts,* they will have repeated opportunities to explore and talk about their own feelings and behaviors, and to discuss and respond to the feelings and behaviors of others. While the experiences themselves are important, the spirit in which the activities are presented is equally important. By creating a warm, inclusive environment where feelings are accepted without judgement and where self-expression is encouraged, you will enable your students to develop not only the skills of self-management, but expanded awareness coupled with esteem and respect for themselves and others.

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Introduction

We all have feelings. This simple statement describes a primary fact about our existence as human beings. Feelings link us to our environment, our body, our thoughts, and our memories. Feelings tell us about conditions around us and the state of our physical and mental well-being. Feelings also shape the way we behave. This link between feelings and behavior is one of the main reasons *Feelings Are Facts* was written.

Because feelings play such an important role in shaping behavior, in order to manage and change behavior we must first manage feelings. And before we can manage feelings, we must understand them. *Feelings Are Facts* is about understanding, managing, and learning from feelings. It is a collection of activities designed to help children explore, understand and express their feelings in safe and acceptable ways.

More than anything else, *Feelings Are Facts* is a resource for teachers and counselors who want to help children develop sound self-management skills, which include the ability to take charge of feelings and behavior.

It is possible to differentiate between *emotions* and *feelings*, though in practice a distinction is usually not made. As humans, we inherit a vast repertoire of emotions developed over the millennia for purposes of survival and adaptation. These emotions represent broad categories that describe, in all their mixtures and shadings, the various relationships we have with ourselves, others, and things that are happening in our lives. They include anger, sadness, fear, and happiness. Everyone has these emotions.

The term *feelings*, on the other hand, is typically used to describe the unique responses produced when we have an emotional experience. Feelings are unique because they flow from an accumulation of individual experiences, learnings, and beliefs. People do not react to events in exactly the same way or with identical degrees of feeling. Whether confronting a situation that involves our senses or one that primarily triggers thoughts, we immediately develop a perception of that situation. If the perception has emotional significance (i.e., involves anger, sadness, fear, and/or happiness), we instantly experience a set of feelings based on our perception. We may, for example, tap the emotion anger, while experiencing feelings of frustration, disappointment, confusion, vengefulness, etc.

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How we feel about something determines its level of importance, value, or influence in our lives.

The emotion is the same for everyone. The feelings generated by the emotion differ from one person to another based on prior experiences and beliefs. Think of a pair of glasses. Emotions are like the frames. Feelings are like the lenses. We all have the same frames, but each of us has a different set of lenses.

Although emotions and feelings differ in these ways, the distinctions are largely technical and semantic. In *Feelings Are Facts* we use the terms interchangeably.

Important feelings concepts

Feelings make people human and kindred. They are powerful motivators, propelling individuals to perform thousands of actions in hundreds of different ways as they respond to themselves, others and events on a daily basis. Whether good or bad, actions are always driven by feelings.

On global and historical scales, humanity has shown itself rather ignorant of the meaning, control, and effective utilization of emotional experience. This lack of understanding has resulted in unnecessary widespread human misery. On a smaller scale, individuals do much better. Teachers and counselors, for example, know that a child's inability to control and manage feelings in a classroom can have destructive effects, and routinely take steps to prevent emotional outbursts from damaging relationships, property, and the climate of learning.

Whether feelings are pleasant and positive or unpleasant and negative, they are inherently *morally neutral* and, as such, cannot be labeled good or bad or right or wrong in an ethical sense. Feelings are the natural way we all have of obtaining vital information about whatever conditions we are in. Feelings just are! Children need to learn that they are not "good" people when they experience positive feelings, such as joy and satisfaction and, at the same time, they are not "bad" people when they experience negative emotions, such as fear and anger. It is natural and normal to experience such positive and negative feelings — everyone does.

Children do, however, need an awareness of their feelings in order to develop the skills necessary to effectively manage their behavior. When children are self-observant and acknowledge the reality of their feelings, reason can be effectively applied to a situation and appropriate actions chosen. As they learn to understand and manage the feelings that produce behavior, children begin to realize that they choose, and are responsible for, their behavior. While the emotions and feelings that drive behavior are neither good or bad, right or wrong, the resulting behavior — whether

constructive or destructive — can logically be judged for its effects or moral consequences. Anything that supports children in learning about themselves and how to manage the multitude of emotions and feelings that inevitably bombard their formative years is of immeasurable benefit.

Where do feelings come from?

The modern effort to understand and explain the source of feelings began with the work of William James in 1884 as he undertook to define the mental process by which feelings emanate. Today, we have opened a new field of exploration that brings together various disciplines under the label *cognitive neuroscience*. Through the many advances that have been made relative to the brain/mind complex, we not only better understand the mental processes that generate feelings, we are able to observe the biological functioning of the brain during the flow of information that ultimately results in feelings. Whereas in the past the focus was mainly on the experience of feelings and emotions, today we are looking increasingly at the *mechanisms* involved.

Current research suggests that the flow of information leading to feelings begins with either sensory or cognitive input. A sensory perception is one involving either the environment as perceived through vision, sight, touch, smell, or taste; or the body as conveyed through the nervous system. A cognitive perception is one that is generated internally by the mind, and springs from a thought, memory, or image. These primary sources provide us information from which to determine the quality and meaning of a perception.

The emotional operating systems

Research indicates that two separate processing systems exist in the brain, and are instrumental in elevating initial data input to conscious level feelings. While they operate independently, these systems do interact.

The first of these mechanisms, the *Affective Processing System* or *APS*, is central to emotional functioning, initially making the distinction between emotional and non-emotional situations (stimuli). The APS operates very quickly, determining only if and to what extent an event contains emotional components.

Once an event is determined to be of an emotional nature, it is evaluated with respect to its affective significance by the second system, the *Cognitive Processing System* or *CPS*. Both systems process data, but with different outcomes. For example, the determination that a snake is a vertebrate, biologically closer to an alligator than a cow, having skin that can be used to make belts and shoes, has very different consequences

than the determination that a snake is likely to be dangerous. The former is the work of the CPS, while the latter is a product of the APS.

The messages we receive following an event (stimulus) come from these two sources. The APS determines the event's emotional stature while the CPS gives us information or facts about the situation. The APS looks at how the stimulus relates to the individual while the CPS gives the stimulus a meaningful context and provides information about how the stimulus relates to its environment.

The APS operates much faster than the CPS because it has to process relatively little information to determine whether and to what extent a stimulus is emotional. The work of the APS seems to be completed instantaneously. Since it operates so quickly, the APS is the seat of all our reactions. For example, when you are surprised by something, your response is instantaneous and requires no thought. It seems to be automatic. That's the APS doing its job!

Information generated by the APS is sent along to the CPS for further processing, but not before the APS initiates our first wave of feelings and responses by sending electrical and chemical messages throughout the body. These messages trigger the reaction process that produces feelings.

When the CPS receives information from the APS regarding and emotional event or stimulus, two possibilities exist. First, the CPS can pursue a predetermined or automatic course (irrational and without thought), which results in a predictable response that now includes behavior. If this course is chosen, all processing takes place outside the conscious level.

The second course of action that can be pursued by the CPS is to override the automatic or unconscious response with conscious level or rational processing. This possibility exists because, at the instant the APS discharges its electrical and chemical messages, the individual starts becoming aware of feelings and information at the conscious level. Depending on the level of affect or the intensity of the emotion, the feelings may be so powerful that the individual can do nothing but respond irrationally. In retrospect, we sometimes characterize a response like this by saying, "If I had that to do over again, I'd do it differently." The power of the response is capable of overwhelming any conscious effort to control it — but this is not an inevitable result.

If the messages received and in turn processed by the CPS have sufficiently low levels of affect, or if the individual *has learned how to take charge of and manage feelings,* then a rational conscious level response can be developed. This constitutes the difference between acting and reacting in an emotionally charged situation.

You can begin to see why a child we typically describe as *acting out*, might better be described as *acting out of control*.

It is the aim of *Feelings Are Facts* to assist children to learn the awarenesses and skills that permit them to understand, manage, and learn from their feelings so that they can enhance the quality of their behavior and achieve higher levels of performance while contributing to the smooth functioning of the classroom.

Changing responses to feelings

Two additional observations regarding the flow and content of emotions in the brain and mind are important to consider. First, when an individual is able to take conscious control of his/her behavioral responses to emotions, information concerning the behavior flows back to the CPS and the APS. Recall that the initial evaluation of the APS and the subsequent processing of the CPS were based on accumulated experiences, learnings, and beliefs held in long-term memory. Research now shows that when we supersede unconscious processes or automatic (irrational) responses with conscious or rational responses, we begin to replace information in long-term memory. Our automatic responses are upgraded to more closely resemble those that are consciously chosen. In this way, we permanently change behavior for the better. This simple truth is at the base of both cognitive psychology and the more narrowly defined approach embodied in Rational-Emotive Therapy.

The second observation that will help us in dealing with feelings reveals that the APS develops more quickly than the CPS. The APS is almost fully developed at birth, while the CPS in normal development doesn't mature until between 24 and 36 months. Even after reaching maturity in physical development, several more years pass as the CPS acquires the ability to rationally manage feelings and subsequent behavior. The knowledge and skills necessary to manage and learn from our feelings are not inborn. They must be learned.

Feelings Are Facts is designed to provide the basis for developing in children the ability to use managed feelings to change behavior. Since both the APS and the CPS are essential players in the rational management of feelings and behavior, and since the CPS is not fully capable of this function until late childhood and early adolescence, *Feelings Are Facts* targets this age range, where the potential for development is optimal.

Repressing feelings

Societies have always been organized in part to restrict the free expression of human impulses and drives. Restrictions have traditionally been placed on individuals by those in authority to keep behavior within acceptable

bounds. If schools and classrooms are to run smoothly, children must learn appropriate ways to express the feelings these impulses and drives produce.

When a child's impulses conflict with the rules and restrictions of society, the child apprehends danger and experiences feelings of anxiety. Since anxiety is an extremely disagreeable feeling, the child, having only a fuzzy, budding comprehension of what's happening, automatically inhibits these natural and often instinctive impulses. This unconscious, predetermined and irrational suppression of an impulse or behavior and the feelings and thoughts that go with it is called *repression*.

Repression occurs when individuals experience feelings or thoughts they judge to be unacceptable and refuse to acknowledge them, burying them in the unconscious. But the impulses from which these feelings or thoughts arise do not go away. If not given acceptable outlets, they find other forms of expression that are likely to be detrimental, or at least not conducive to health and growth. In this way, an individual may repress one inappropriate behavior only to replace it with another. This pattern often characterizes a child who seems to constantly act out, but with an ever changing set of behaviors. As one behavior is repressed, it is replaced by another, with each new behavior reinforcing a pattern of irrational behavior.

Repression of behaviors that are contrary to social norms is important to the maintenance of the broad social structure, but too often children learn to needlessly repress much of their life experience. They choose the course of routine repression in order to maintain their own social structure and to be seen as acceptable by others, particularly those in authority like parents and teachers. If children perceive that their behavior is unacceptable, they begin to see themselves as unacceptable. To avoid this, they become skilled at repressing unacceptable behavior and all the thoughts and feelings that go with it. Developing this habit of repression operates to their detriment from the day it begins. It takes away a vital means by which children explore and define much of what life offers them. More importantly, children can learn to repress not only the things they perceive to be unacceptable, but things that are unpleasant or uncomfortable as well. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that when children are "acting out of control," they may well be struggling with irrational or automatic responses to feelings. As a teacher or counselor, you have an opportunity to help children think through both the feelings and the behavior to facilitate growth and develop control. Attacking either the behavior or the child can only promote repression and spawn new and perhaps even more detrimental behaviors.

Feelings and stress

Remembering that our feelings are indicators of the condition of our environment, body, and thoughts, it follows that feelings also alert us to stressful events and conditions in our lives. To some degree, anything that is perceived as having emotional content related to fear, anger, or sadness produces stress. Stress is generated by the same mechanisms that produce feelings, and *uncomfortable* feelings are the means by which we are able to identify stress. If individuals develop the habit of repressing uncomfortable feelings, they inhibit awareness of stress in their lives.

We now know that the same electrical and chemical stimuli that are produced to generate feelings also attack our bodies and greatly contribute to deterioration of physical and mental well-being. The feelings associated with stress exist to warn us that something in our lives needs attention. If we deny or repress these feelings, that warning goes unheeded. And failing to heed stress warnings affects not only our health, but our performance. Brain research tells us that unattended stress shuts down major components of the Cognitive Processing System, a system that is absolutely necessary for thinking and learning to take place.

Learning ability in children who are unable to manage their feelings, particularly feelings associated with stress, is reduced in proportion to the level of stress experienced. Considerable research has demonstrated the relationship between the emotional and educational development of children. Studies suggest that academic achievement is significantly influenced by emotions. It stands to reason that students who are preoccupied with extreme negative feelings and the stress and tension that accompany them are not fully engaged in learning. The role of teachers and counselors should be to expose students to as many ways as possible to learn about, express, and manage their feelings.

In summary, the ability to understand and manage feelings is fundamental to managing stress. The inability to understand and manage feelings inhibits learning. And if the detrimental affects on health and learning aren't enough, unmanaged stress also shuts down the ability to think through appropriate behavioral responses in social situations and can lead to conflict in the classroom and on the playground.

Understanding, managing and learning from feelings

When children are given opportunities to learn about their feelings, they start to understand and manage them. Children need many opportunities to focus on their feelings and how those relate to their thoughts and behaviors. The classroom is an excellent place for children to safely explore and get to know their feelings. When they truly understand the value of feelings,

children are able to function more effectively in every aspect of school and personal life. *Feelings Are Facts* provides activities designed to produce these results.

The first step in learning about feelings is developing the ability to articulate them. One of the primary areas of focus in *Feelings Are Facts* is communication. In order for students to develop into healthy self-confident adults, they need plenty of opportunities to talk about their feelings in a safe, accepting environment.

Discussion of negative feelings is as important as talking about positive feelings. If students think their feelings of anger, hate, aggression, or hostility are unnatural or "bad," they may reach the conclusion that *they* are unnatural or bad. Sharing helps children recognize that they aren't the only ones with negative feelings. At one time or another, we all feel angry, hurt, embarrassed, jealous, and frightened. These are natural, common responses. Our feelings make us human and *all* feelings are "okay." The process of exploring and expressing feelings helps students learn to cope. Sometimes expression alone can defuse much of the tension produced by strong negative feelings.

Students derive many additional benefits from talking about their feelings as well as from listening when others discuss feelings. For example, through sharing and discussion, negative emotions can be defused before they are acted out in potentially destructive ways.

Finally, children learn to recognize and distinguish between various kinds of feelings, and to use their feelings to improve the richness and quality of their lives.

Although the majority of activities in *Feelings Are Facts* are intended to serve as preventive tools, you will undoubtedly be faced with an occasional crisis or emotional overreaction and will need to make a direct intervention. Listening may prove the most valuable helping behavior of all in such situations. Encouraging students to release their feelings and articulate their fear, anger, or sadness will help them begin to manage whatever situation they face.

Remember that feelings are the lenses through which we view and interpret reality. They can become powerful tools for developing self-control and personal mastery. Through acceptance and understanding of feelings, *Feelings Are Facts* teaches children to take charge of situations that would normally take charge of them. This is the essence of self-management. How we support the emotional development and self-management of our students will significantly impact their social, emotional, and academic potential now and well into their adult years.

Feelings Are Facts

ACTIVITIES

The Active Listener

Communication Skill Practice

Objectives:

The students will:

- define the role of the listener in communication.
- identify and demonstrate "active listening" behaviors.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and marker

Procedure:

On the chalkboard or chart paper, draw a simple diagram illustrating the communication process by printing the words, SENDING and RECEIVING and draw two arrows pointing in opposite directions between the two words. Write the word *communication* above the diagram. Explain to the students that *communication* is a word that describes the ways people send and receive messages. Ask the students to think of ways in which people communicate with each other, e.g. talking face-to-face, a telephone conversation, writing notes and letters, electronic messages via computer, television, radio, sign language, body language, etc.

Refer to the diagram, explaining that in communication a message is sent from one person (the sender) to another person (the receiver). During face-to-face verbal communication between two people, the speaker is the sender and the listener is the receiver. In your own words, elaborate: *Before we learned to talk as young children, we listened to others for a long time in order to understand and imitate their language. Now that we can communicate by speaking, we must also be good listeners in order to have effective two-way communication.*

Ask the students to describe what a good listener (receiver) does to show that he or she is interested in what the speaker (sender) is saying. Write their ideas on the chalkboard. Be sure to include these behaviors.

1. Face the speaker (sender).
2. Look into the speaker's eyes.

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3. Be relaxed, but attentive.
4. Listen to the words and try to picture in your own mind what the sender is telling you.
5. Prevent yourself from interrupting or fidgeting.
6. When it is your turn to respond, stay on the subject until it is "finished."
7. If you don't understand something, wait for the speaker to pause and then ask, "What do you mean by...?".
8. Try to understand how the speaker is feeling.
9. Respond in ways that let the speaker know that you are listening and understand what is being said. Ways of responding might include nodding, saying, "Uh huh," summarizing what the speaker said, or restating the feelings involved.

Explain to the students that this type of listening is called "active listening" and that they will have an opportunity to practice these active listening behaviors by taking turns speaking and listening. Select a few of the following topics and write them on the board:

— A time I needed some help
— Something I'd like to do better
— A problem I need to solve
— A time I got into an argument
— A time I had to make a tough decision
— What I'd like to be or do when I am an adult

Divide the students into groups of three and ask each group to name its members **A**, **B**, and **C**. Explain that the activity will have three rounds. In the first round, **A** will be the sender (speaker), **B** will be the receiver (listener), and **C** will be the observer of active listening behaviors. **C** may want to jot down on paper specific behaviors observed. After **A** chooses a topic from the board, signal the start of the round, allowing 3 minutes for **A** to speak and **B** to listen. After time is called, give **C** 1 minute to report his/her observations to the group. Conduct two more rounds. Ask each person to rotate to a new role at the start of each round.

After each person has had a turn being speaker, listener, and observer, gather all groups for a debriefing. Use the following questions as a springboard for discussion:

1. When you were the sender, did you feel like you were really being listened to? How did that make you feel?
2. What active listening behaviors did you observe?
3. What was easiest (hardest) about active listening?
4. What did you learn from your observer?
5. Why is it important to be a good listener?
6. How can active listening help you resolve a conflict with someone?

Communication Counts

Sending Messages

Objectives:

The students will:

- define communication and identify ways in which people communicate.
- state rules for effective speaking.
- demonstrate good speaking in a practice session.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk

Procedure:

Write the word *communication* on the chalkboard. Ask the students if they can define it in their own words. (See "Active Listener" activity.) Discuss the idea that in communication, there is an exchange of information. In a conversation, a message is transmitted from a speaker to a listener.

If the students have participated in the "Active Listener" activity, briefly review with them the rules for good listening. Tell the students that in this activity, they will have an opportunity to focus on good speaking. First, suggest that they think of someone they know who speaks well and is easily understood. Next, ask that they think about what that person does when speaking that is particularly effective. Invite the students to share ideas with the group. Generate a list of good speaking rules, making sure that the list includes the following items:

1. Think about what you want to say before you speak.
2. Speak clearly and loud enough for the listener to understand you.
3. Look at the person to whom you are speaking.
4. Talk about what you know and what's important to you.

(Continued)

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5. Use changes in pitch (high and low sounds) and speed to emphasize important words and ideas.
6. Allow the listener to respond to what you are saying.

Ask the students to divide into pairs and to name one partner **A** and the other **B**. Explain that in this activity each person will have an opportunity to talk about a chosen topic, demonstrating good speaking behaviors. Ask the **A**'s to speak first, then the **B**'s. Each person will have three minutes to talk.

Write the following topics on the board, or select one yourself as the topic for this session:

— My family and my place and role in it.
— My favorite animal (book, movie, singer, person) and why I like it.
— A compliment (or acknowledgement) I would like to receive from others and why.
— A school rule that I appreciate and how it helps me.
— A school rule that I don't like and how and why I would change it.

Discussion Questions:

After each person has had a chance to talk, invite the whole group to participate in a debriefing discussion. Use the following questions to stimulate thinking:

1. Which rules for good speaking did your partner use?
2. Which good speaking rules were easy (difficult) to use?
3. How did you feel as the speaker? ...the listener?
4. How can speaking well help you at home? ...in school? ...with friends?

Say What You Mean

Communicating Clearly

Objectives:

The students will:

- identify clear and unclear communication
- demonstrate examples of clear communication in creative drama and art

Materials:

(optional) drawing paper and colored pencils; crayons or markers

Procedure:

Begin by explaining how much people depend on their ability to communicate with each other in order to have understanding, agreement, cooperation, collaboration, and freedom from conflict. Mention that good communication can promote understanding and peace and bad communication can cause misunderstandings and other problems. Bad, or poor communication, can result from *unclear communication* or *no communication* at all.

Give examples of unclear communication or no communication and ask the students how each could create misunderstandings, conflicts, and bad feelings. Create your own examples or choose from the following:

Unclear communication:

- Your friend has an argument with his mom and comes to school in a bad mood. He greets you with a scornful grunt and says he wants to eat lunch alone when you invite him to join you. You wonder if you did something to offend him.
- A parent calls you "an exceptional child" in front of company. You don't know whether to be pleased or angry with the comment.

(Continued)

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No communication

- — You and your friends plan a spontaneous celebration of the end of the semester, and decide to throw a party in which everyone will bring something to eat or drink. You all show up with chips and dip or cookies, but no one brings something to drink. You each blame the others for not planning well.
- — You write a note of apology to a fellow student because you yelled out in class in a heated discussion and said some unkind things about him. The student doesn't respond to the note and you don't know whether he accepts your apology or not.

Have the students divide into pairs or small groups for this activity. Explain that you are going to give them a situation in which communication is either unclear or lacking, and they are to act it out, including possible outcomes of the situation. Next they are to create a similar situation in which the characters communicate clearly and the outcome is satisfying.

Choose from the following situations or create some that are more appropriate for your students. Allow the groups 5 or 10 minutes to plan and rehearse their skits. Then ask each small group to present its scenarios before the whole group.

Situation 1: Jessica and Patrick like each other, but both are a little shy. Patrick comes to school with a new haircut, and Jessica thinks it is really attractive. When Patrick comes up to Jessica to ask about an assignment, she puts her fingers in his hair and messes it up, saying, "Hey, your hair is really short and it's outrageous!" The other kids laugh. Patrick turns red and walks away from Jessica. He thinks to himself, "I guess Jessica doesn't like my new haircut and doesn't care how I feel either."

(What could Jessica have said instead to make sure Patrick knew she liked his hair and still cared for him? How would he have responded then?)

Situation 2: Mitchell and Ryan are pals. They decide to go on a five-mile hike in a nearby forest preserve one Saturday. They agree to meet at the one mile point, each hiking in from a different trail. Ryan says, "It's going to be a great adventure! I'll bring some stuff for the hike." Mitchell nods in agreement, "So will I. That's a good idea." They meet at the appointed

mile marker, but each boy has a snake bite kit, sunscreen, and a camera. Neither none has brought food or water, and both are already thirsty. They look at each other in annoyance.

(What could Ryan and Mitchell have said to each other to create a better plan? How might the outcome have been different?)

Situation 3: Woody came home from school one day and no one was there. Since his homework was done, he went outside to ride his bike. A few blocks from his home, Woody ran into a buddy who invited him to his house to play video games. Woody said, "Yes", and played with his friend until past his dinner time. When he finally came home, his mother was hysterical. "Where have you been? I searched around the entire neighborhood for you. I was about to call the police!"

(What could Woody have done to communicate with his mom? How would the situation have ended then?)

After everyone has had a chance to act out a scenario, using both bad and good communication, lead a summary discussion or invite the students to summarize their understanding in art form. Distribute drawing paper and have the students divide each sheet in half. Ask them to think of a situation in which unclear or no communication causes a problem and draw it on the first half of the paper. On the second half, have them draw the same scenario with clear communication and a satisfactory outcome. Invite the students to use speech bubbles like they see in comic strips. After the pictures are done, allow the students to explain their pictures to the group.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to communicate clearly and completely?
2. How can you find out if you have communicated clearly?
3. What can you do to better understand someone who doesn't communicate completely or clearly?

Don't Say "You", Say "I"

Experience Sheet and Sharing

Objectives:

The students will:

- compare "I" messages and "you" messages and describe their differences.
- practice formulating "I" messages.

Materials:

one copy per student of the experience sheet, "Don't Say 'You', Say 'I'"; chalkboard and chalk

Procedure:

Begin by reviewing or discussing the roles of the sender and receiver in communication. Be sure to include the idea that the sender is the speaker and the receiver is the listener and that both roles are important to clear communication. Explain to the students that in this activity they will focus on a special role that the speaker takes when sending a message, especially in a possible conflict situation. This role is that of the sender of an "I" message. An "I" message is one in which the speaker tells the listener his/her own feelings, thoughts, observations, and/or desires rather than saying, "You..." and blaming, threatening, or calling names. "You" messages are often judgmental, which makes the receiver feel mad or hurt and usually makes a problem worse.

Demonstrate "I" and "You" messages for the students by giving one or more examples. Following are two scenarios using both "I" and "You" messages:

Example #1

"You" message: "Michael, you are such a jerk! Your work's not done again and it'll be your fault if we can't go out to recess. Can't you clean up your act?"

vs.

"I" message: "Michael, I'm upset that you might not finish your assignment by recess and we will all have to stay in. I would like to see you concentrate harder on your work."

(Point out that in the "I" message, the sender tells how he or she feels, what he or she observes, and what s/he wishes would happen.)

Example #2

"You" message: "Janina, are you dumb, or just lazy? Look at all those open marking pens. You ruined them!"

vs.

"I" message: "Janina, I feel so frustrated when I see the marking pens that have been left open all night, because they dry out and we can't use them any more. I would really like it if you would put the covers on them when you are finished using them."

(Point out that the "I" message communicates the sender's feelings and desires.)

Distribute the experience sheets and go over the directions. Allow several minutes for the students to complete the "speech bubbles," individually or in pairs. When the students are finished, ask volunteers to read the "You" message, followed by the "I" message in each set of cartoons. Invite others to role play their versions of the "I" messages.

Discussion Questions:

Summarize the activity by asking the following questions for thought and/or discussion:

1. How do you feel when someone gives you a "you" message? ...an "I" message?
2. What is the hardest part of composing an "I" message?
3. How can using "I" messages help us settle arguments and resolve conflicts?

Don't Say "You" — Say "I"

Experience Sheet

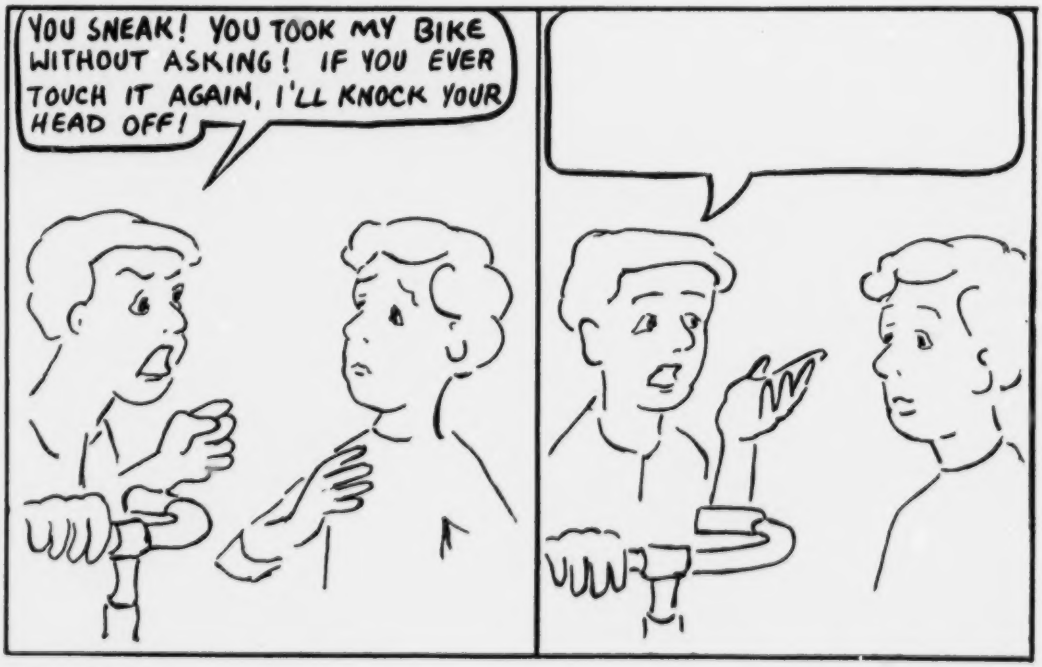
Good Communication is the Key!

When another person does something we don't like, we may be tempted to send the person a **"you" message**. "You" messages get their name from the fact that they often start with the word "you." They are blaming messages. They can make the other person feel mad or hurt—and they can make the situation worse.

Try using an **"I" message** instead. "I" messages talk about your feelings and needs. They can help the other person understand you. Here's how to make an "I" message:

1. **Describe the situation.** It may help to begin with the words, "When..." or "When you..."
2. **Say how you feel.** "When you....., I feel....."
3. **Describe what you want the person to do.** "When you....., I feel....., and I want you to....."

Now, you try it! Read the "you" message in the first cartoon bubble. Then write a better message—an "I" message—in the second bubble.



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CINDY, THIS PHONE DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU! IF YOU DON'T HANG UP RIGHT NOW, I'M GOING TO TELL MOM. YOU'RE SUCH A SELFISH HOG!
ALL THE OTHER KIDS ARE GOING TO THE PARTY! IT'S NOT FAIR THAT YOU MAKE ME STAY HOME AND BABY SIT ALL THE TIME. YOU'RE RUINING MY LIFE!

REMEMBER— Use "I" Messages in Real Life!

19

What's Your Style?

Creative Dramatics

Objectives:

The students will:

— demonstrate assertive, aggressive, and passive response styles.

— explain why assertiveness is the most effective and positive of the response styles.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk

Procedure:

Write the words "Passive", "Aggressive", and "Assertive" on the board. Explain to the students that these labels represent styles of responding to people and events. Two of the styles create problems: aggressive and passive. The third style, assertive, is usually very effective. Using the following information, explain the styles to the students, giving an example of each.

• Aggressive

An aggressive person acts like a bully and pushes others around — physically, verbally, or both. He or she responds to situations by speaking loudly, acting or sounding angry, and using threats, accusations, and name-calling. An aggressive person doesn't respect the rights of others, and can make you feel angry, hurt, or scared.

• Passive

A passive person is what you might call "wishy-washy." He or she speaks very softly, slumps, doesn't look at you, and may even appear scared or nervous. Passive people feel unsure. They usually let others make the decisions, which they go along with, but they also let others take the responsibility or blame for dangerous or wrong decisions.

• Assertive

Standing up for what you want and believe, while respecting the rights of others, is one way of describing the assertive response style. You look directly

at others without staring in a threatening way, and speak up confidently, using "I" messages. An assertive person doesn't always do what the crowd does. He or she follows through on responsibilities to other people.

Explain to the students that this is an activity in which they will have a chance to "act out" the three response styles for several situations you will give them. Choose from the situations below or use situations that resemble more closely those that occur in your school or in the students' neighborhoods and homes.

1. You are on the basketball court with friends, and two captains are choosing teams for a game. You want to play center, but so do two others on your team.
2. You are at a birthday party. The kids start talking about playing a mean trick on a friend of yours who is not there.
3. Two friends come to your house one Saturday and ask if they can come in. Your parents left for the day and said you may not let anyone in the house. You want to obey your parents, but your friends make it hard for you. They insist that no one will know.
4. Your best friend invites you to her (his) house to study after school. She takes you to her room, closes the door, and shows you a marijuana cigarette that someone gave her. She wants you to try smoking it with her just to see what it's like, but you really don't want to.

This activity can be done in pairs or small groups, with each person acting out a different response style. Allow 5 or 10 minutes for groups to prepare and practice. Then invite them to act out the scenarios for the larger group.

Discussion Questions:

Summarize by asking the students to think about the differences between the three response styles and how they affect the outcome of a situation. Ask for written responses to the following questions, or use them to spark a follow-up discussion:

1. What are the differences between aggressive, passive, and assertive response styles?
2. Which response style is the most effective? Why?
3. How can a passive person become more assertive?
4. How can an aggressive person become more assertive?

Should I, or Shouldn't I?

Identifying Peer Pressure

Objectives:

The students will:

- define peer pressure and identify different styles of peer pressure.
- demonstrate in art form examples of different styles of peer pressure.
- identify decision-making questions to use when faced with peer pressure.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk; drawing paper; colored pencils, markers, or crayons

Procedure:

Write the words "Peer Pressure" on the board and ask the students if they can explain what it is. Write their responses on the board. Elicit words and phrases such as *influence, friends, classmates, convincing,* and *persuasion.* Ask the students what needs peer pressure appeals to and add those responses to the board. Focus on the concept of acceptance by a group (fitting in with friends, belonging to the group, etc.). Finally, create a definition of peer pressure, such as *The strong influence of peers on a person, appealing to his/her need for acceptance by the group.*

Explain that peer pressure can influence people to make healthy, productive choices, and it can also influence them to do things that are illegal, unhealthy, dangerous or contrary to their feelings and beliefs. Ask volunteers to share with the group a peer pressure situation they have experienced.

Discuss the idea that peer pressure comes in many forms, called *styles.* List the following styles on the board and give an example of each. Invite

students to give additional examples and talk about the feelings that each type of statement creates.

Friendly: "Come on, you're such a pal, do just this one thing..."
Teasing: "You won't do it because you're in love with..."
Intimidating: "He's bigger than you, so you'd better..."
Guilt-producing: "If you cared at all about me, you'd..."
Humiliating: "You're just a little wimp!"
Bribing: "I'll do your math homework if you'll..."
Threatening: "If you don't do it, I'll tell..."

Distribute drawing paper and markers (pencils, crayons). Ask the students to choose one of the peer pressure styles and create a poster illustrating that style. Suggest that they use speech bubbles or dialogue boxes to show conversations. Make sure that each style is being illustrated by one or more students.

When the posters are finished, allow time for sharing. Display them on walls, doors, and windows for all to enjoy.

Discussion Questions:

Culminate this activity by reminding the students that although they want to fit in and belong, they are also individuals who can decide when to go along with others and when to stand their ground. Ask them to think of the various styles of peer pressure and possible questions they can ask themselves when deciding whether or not to go along with their peers. Questions like the following can be generated:

- What are my peers asking me to do?
- How are they trying to get me to do it?
- Do I really want to do it?
- What are the consequences of my doing it?
- Is doing this good for me?
- What other choices do I have?

The Write Stuff

A Vocabulary of Feelings

Objectives:

The students will:

- acquaint themselves with a variety of feelings words and their meanings through discussion.
- demonstrate an understanding of new feelings words through writing.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk; a copy of the experience sheet, "A Vocabulary of Feelings" for each student; writing paper and pencils

Procedure:

Begin by asking the students to brainstorm all the words that they can think of to describe feelings. Cover the board with these words. Ask volunteers to choose words from the list, and describe real or hypothetical situations which might cause them to feel that way. For example, a student who chooses the word "exasperated," might say that constantly having to pick up a younger sister's dirty clothes makes her feel exasperated.

After many students have shared their situations using the words on the board, distribute the sheet, "**A Vocabulary of Feelings.**" Give the students several minutes to look over the words and notice any that are unfamiliar. Then ask volunteers to name unfamiliar words and discuss their meaning with the whole group.

Explain to the students that they are going to have an opportunity to practice some of the words from the list that they previously did not know or don't usually use. Ask them to choose 5 (or more) words which they would like practice using and write a sentence using each in an

appropriate context. Tell the students that they may use any of the following suggestions in creating their sentences:

1. **Use a sentence pattern:** "I feel/felt (new feeling word) when (something happens/happened)."
2. **If possible, change a word to an adverb by adding *ly* and use it to describe an action:** "I jealously watched as my opponent received the gold medal in the 100 yard dash."
3. **Use the word in a sentence that tells why someone feels/felt that way:** "The miserable woman trudged another five miles through the snow looking for a service station at which to buy gas for her stalled car."
4. **Older students may try to change a feeling word to a noun and use that word in a sentence:** deceitful-deceit, comfortable-comfort, joyous-joy, ambivalent-ambivalence, ecstatic-ecstasy.

Remind students to make sure that their feeling words fit the situations they describe in their sentences. Encourage creativity, humor, and correct usage.

When the students have completed their sentences, ask them to form pairs and to read their sentences to their partners. Invite the partners to give feedback to each other as to their favorite sentence and why they like it. Then gather the group together and invite each person to share a sentence.

Summarize the activity by asking the students to think about all the words that can be used to describe a variety of feelings, many of which have only a slightly different meaning than other words. Ask the students why they think it could be beneficial to know many different feeling words.

A Vocabulary of Feelings

abandoned
accepted
adamant
adequate
affectionate
afraid
agony
alarmed
alienated from others
ambivalent
annoyed
anxious
apathetic
appreciated
astounded
attractive
awed
awkward

bad
beaten
beautiful
betrayed
bewildered
bitter
blissful
bold
bored
brave
burdened

comfortable
concerned
confident
connected
cop-out, like a
cowardly
creative
curious
cut off from others

deceitful
defeated
dejected
delighted
dependent
depressed
deprived
desperate
destructive
determined
different
diffident
diminished
disappointed in myself
discontented
distracted
distraught
disturbed
divided
dominated
dubious

eager
ecstatic
elated
electrified
embarrassed
empty
enchanted
energetic
enjoyment
envious
evasive
evil
exasperated
excited
exhausted
exhilarated

fawning
fearful
flustered
foolish
frantic
free
friendless
frightened
frustrated
full

glad
good
grateful
gratified
greedy
grief
groovy
guilty
gullible
gutless

happy
hateful
helpful
helpless
high
homesick

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honored
hopeful
hopeless
horrible
hostile
hurt
hysterical

ignored
immortal
immobilized
impatient
Imposed upon
impressed
inadequate
incompetent
inconsistent
in control
indecisive
independent
infatuated
inferior
infuriated
inhibited
insecure
insincere
inspired
intimidated
involved
isolated

jealous
joyous
judgmental
jumpy

lazy
left out
lonely
loser, like a
lovable

loving
low
loyal

manipulated
miserable
misunderstood

needy
nervous

odd
opposed
optimistic
outraged
overlooked
overwhelmed

panicked
paranoid
peaceful
persecuted
petrified
pleasant
pleased
possessive
preoccupied
pressured

quarrelsome
quiet

refreshed
rejected
relaxed
relieved
religious
remorseful
repulsive
restless
restrained

sad
satisfied
scared
screwed up
settled
sexy
shallow
shocked
shy
silly
sluggish
sorry for self
strained
stunned
stupid
sure

tempted
tense
threatened
thwarted
tired
torn
touchy
trapped
troubled

unappreciated
uncertain
uneasy
unsettled
up-tight
used

violent
vivacious
vulnerable

wishy-washy
wonderful
worried

27

A Time I Remember Feeling...

Dyad Sequence and Discussion

Objectives:

The students will:

- discuss their feelings as they relate to specific topics.
- begin to understand that all people experience the same feelings, but in different ways.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and magic marker

Procedure:

Select 10 to 12 feeling words from the following list and write them on the chalkboard or chart paper. Choose words that are appropriate for the age and maturity of your students.

"A Time I Remember Feeling...

...Mad"	...Left Out"	...Lonely"	...Bored"
...Free"	...Self-conscious	...Annoyed"	...Helpless"
...Suspicious"	...Confident"	...Relieved"	...Delighted"
...Curious"	...Overwhelmed"	...Homesick"	...Depressed"
...Amused"	...Guilty"	...Loved"	...Powerful"
...Jealous"	...Surprised"	...Disgusted"	..Peaceful"
...Shocked"	...Worthless"	...Shy"	...Inspired"
...Appreciated"	...Optimistic"	...Embarrassed"	...Pessimistic"
...Uneasy"	...Confused"	...Related"	...Happy"
...Scared"	...Unfairly Treated"		

Introduce the activity by telling the students that they are going to have an opportunity to discuss a number of feelings that they experience. Have the students form groups of four and, taking their chairs with them, spread out to various areas of the room. If necessary, join a group yourself or have one group of six; however, make sure all groups contain an even number of students.

Explain to the students that they will be involved in a dyad sequence in which they talk one-to-one with each member of their group for about 4 minutes concerning a feeling.

Ask the students to pair up with one member of their group. When the dyads are formed, ask the students to decide who will speak first and who will speak second, and to choose a topic from the list on the board. Tell the students that they will each have 1 1/2 minutes to speak to that topic. Ask the first speakers to begin. At the end of 1 1/2 minutes, signal the students to switch roles so that the second speaker can address the same topic for another 1 1/2 minutes.

At the end of the first round, have the students change partners. This is easily accomplished by asking the students who spoke first to remain seated while the students who listened first move to a new partner within their group.

Repeat the process for each subsequent round, continuing until every student has had a dyad discussion with every other person in his/her group. Ask the students to return to their regular seating, and encourage everyone to participate in a culminating discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did you notice or learn as you talked about these feelings with your partners?
2. How did you feel during the activity?
3. What other feelings would you like to talk about?
4. What did you learn about yourself during this activity that you would feel okay sharing with us?
5. When it comes to feelings, in what ways are you like one or more of your partners? In what ways are your feelings different?

Note: A good follow-up to this activity is the experience sheet "Feel Your Feelings."

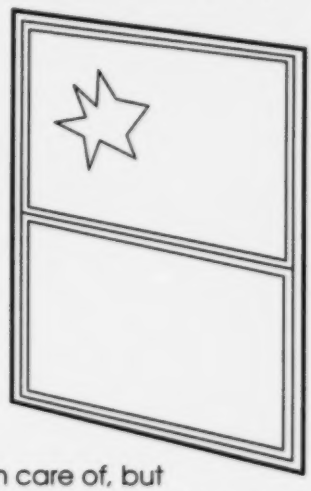
Feel Your Feelings

Experience Sheet

Life includes lots of feelings. We *all* feel them. In that way, everyone is the same. But everyone is different, too. Have you ever observed several people reacting differently to the same thing? As your read the following story, notice that all of the characters have a different feeling about the same event.

The Broken Window

All the kids in the neighborhood were having a great time playing touch football out in the street until the football went sailing through Mr. and Mrs. Henry's window. After the crash, some of the kids got scared and ran away. Margie kicked the ball, so she felt responsible. She wasn't scared, just unhappy. Margie knew that she'd have to be the one to apologize and offer to pay for a new window. Margie's brother, Carl, was embarrassed. He started yelling at Margie. Carl's friend, Juan, just laughed. He was relieved. "I sure am glad I'm not the one who kicked that ball," he said.



Just then Mr. Henry came outside. He was carrying the football. He was very angry at first. But as soon as Margie apologized, he appeared to calm down. When Margie said she would pay for the broken window, he seemed to feel even better.

Then Mrs. Henry came out of the house. She was furious. Mr. Henry told her that everything was taken care of, but she didn't seem at all relieved. "I'm the one who's going to have to hire a worker to fix the window," she shouted.

Each person in this story experienced some feelings. Some of the kids were scared. Carl was embarrassed. Margie felt responsible and unhappy. Juan felt relief. And Mr. and Mrs. Henry both felt anger. But Mrs. Henry was angrier than Mr. Henry. All these different feelings about the same thing — a broken window.

How would you have felt if you had been each one of these people?

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Your feelings are similar to the feelings of other people. Yet you are a one-of-a-kind person. Things that cause you to feel a certain way may cause an entirely different reaction in others. You are not exactly like everyone else.

The following exercise will help you get in touch with some of your feelings. As you write, keep in mind that *everyone* has these feelings. Feelings can be pleasant and unpleasant. But they are not good or bad. They are not right or wrong. Feelings just are!

I am happy when... _____

_____

I become angry when... _____

_____

I am sad when... _____

_____

I get scared when... _____

_____

I feel lonely when... _____

_____

I feel peaceful when... _____

_____

I become frustrated when... _____

_____

I hate it when... _____

_____

I love it when... _____

_____

31

Pantomime a Feeling

A Mime Game and Discussion

Objective:

The students will explore the roles of body language and facial expression in the communication of feelings.

Materials:

Many feeling words (such as those listed below) written separately on small sheets of paper, folded, and placed in a container. **Note:** Choose words that are appropriate for the age/maturity of your students.

relieved	rejected	satisfied	scared	embarrassed
awkward	angry	agonized	delighted	bored
indecisive	bewildered	eager	grief-stricken	tense
impatient	wishy-washy	shy	worried	insecure
mad	sorry for self	disgusted	loveable	powerful
lonely	free	confident	peaceful	silly
cowardly	surprised	hateful	tired	loving
happy	disappointed			

Procedure:

Ask the students to pair up. Have each pair draw one sheet of paper with a feeling word written on it. Direct each pair to take 5 minutes to plan a short pantomime demonstrating their feeling word. Explain that the students are to act only with their faces and bodies. They may not say words or make noises. The object is to do such a good job of pantomime that the class will be able to identify the feeling.

When the students have finished planning, have one pair at a time enact their pantomime. Enjoy and clap after each pantomime. Then ask the group to name the feelings that the actors appeared to be demonstrating. Finally, have the actors describe to the group the situation they were acting out.

Discussion Questions:

After all the students have finished their pantomimes, lead a discussion by asking these and other questions:

1. Did you notice any similarities in the ways certain feelings were expressed?
2. Which feelings seem to be the easiest to read through body language and facial expression?
3. Why do our bodies and faces seem to have a language of their own?
4. What did you learn about body "language" by doing this activity?

Note: A good follow-up to this activity is the experience sheet "Feelings and Your Body."

Feelings and Your Body

Experience Sheet

Sometimes you can figure out how other people are feeling, even if they don't tell you, right? That's because you "speak" the same "body language" as other people. If someone is shaking and sweating, with eyes wide and voice cracking, you probably conclude that the person is afraid. We can often tell what other people are feeling, even at a distance — by the way they move and walk, and by the looks on their faces. And if we hear them talk, their voices give us clues, too.

Try to match the feelings and body reactions listed below. Draw a line from each feeling word to the most likely body reaction. You may decide that some feelings go with several body reactions, or vice versa. At the bottom of the page, list other feelings and body reactions you think of.

Feelings	Body Reactions
anger	tight stomach
joy	trembling jaw
excitement	slouched posture
hurt feelings	bouncy walk
confidence	pounding heart
hate	lump in throat
pride	tight jaw
nervousness	shaky arms and legs
embarrassment	frown
contentment	squeaky voice
fear	tears
grief	jittery feet
happiness	smile
love	sweaty palms
sadness	red face
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

34

The "Feeling" of Poetry

Creative Writing

Objectives:

The students will:

- — experience the manner in which feelings spark creative endeavors.
- — explore their feelings as they relate to specific sensations.

Materials:

writing materials for each student; chalk and chalkboard; stop watch or clock/watch with second hand

Procedure:

Begin by preparing a chart with five columns on the chalkboard. At the top of each column put one of these headings: **Hearing**, **Sight**, **Taste**, **Smell**, and **Touch**

Ask the students to pay careful attention as you read the following poems aloud. As they listen, invite the students to tune into themselves and become aware of the impressions they get — the *pictures* that come into their minds and the *feelings* they experience. Explain that one of the most important ways people use their feelings is to create things. The poems the students are about to hear evoke the sensations of rain. They are examples of written creations that were sparked by feelings.

Raindrops

Softly the rain goes pitter-patter;
Softly the rain comes falling down.
Hark to the people who hurry by,
Raindrops are footsteps from out
the sky!
Softly the rain goes pitter-patter;
Softly the rain comes falling down.

—Author unknown

Rain

The rain is raining all around;
It falls on field and tree;
It rains on the umbrellas here
And the ships at sea.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

(Continued)

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Rain in Summer
How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!
How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs.

How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!
It pours and pours
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Rain
It's raining, raining all around,
Especially in London town.
Splish, splash! of children's feet,
Running down London street.

Splash! on the window pane.
The old man gazes at the rain;
He sighs and turns away his head
And wishes he was young instead.

—Pat Williams, age 13

Discussion Questions:

After you have read *each* poem, ask the students:

1. What did you hear in this poem?
2. What pictures did you see in your mind?
3. What feelings did you experience?
4. What smells did you imagine?
5. What tactile (touch) sensations did you imagine?

As the students call out responses, write their statements in the appropriate column on the chart. From time to time, reread a line or two from a poem to evoke more responses.

Finally, ask the students to write their own poems about rain (or another subject they choose). Suggest that the students borrow words and phrases from the chart as they see fit.

Conclusion:

Ask volunteers to read their poems to the class. After each poem is read, ask the class to name any feelings, sensations, and images they experienced as they listened.

Note: This is an excellent activity to do on a rainy day. If possible, open the windows and turn off the light as you read the poems and as the students write their own poems.

Tune In to Your Feelings

Experience Sheet

When you "tune in" to your feelings, it's the same thing as tuning into yourself. You get to know yourself better.

Have you ever gotten so wrapped up in your thoughts and the things going on around you that you forgot to tune in to your feelings? Think about a time when you said to yourself, "Why did I say that?" or "Why did I do that?" It was probably a time when you were unaware of your feelings. Usually when you know what you are feeling, you are in charge of your words and actions, too.

Think about feelings you've experienced.
Below is a chart that lists five feelings. Read through the list and ask yourself if you have had any of these feelings lately. Put a ✔ in the column that shows how often you've had the feeling during the past week.

	Almost All the Time	Often	A Few Times	Hardly at All	Not at All
Pleasure					
Fear					
Amusement					
Anger					
Love					

(Continued)

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Now write two or more sentences about each feeling. When during the past week did you feel it? What was happening? What thoughts were you having? If you checked the "not at all" column for a feeling, explain what you think kept you from having that feeling.

Pleasure: _____

_____

_____

Fear: _____

_____

_____

Amusement: _____

_____

_____

Anger: _____

_____

_____

Love: _____

_____

_____

Keep a feelings diary. For one or two days, write down all the feelings you experience. Include as many as you can. Write where you were and what happened to bring about each feeling.

See if you can figure out whether or not you experience a lot of feelings in certain situations and very few in other situations. You may discover some interesting patterns that will help you get to know yourself better.

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Painting Our Feelings

Art and Music Activity

Objectives:

The students will:

— express feelings through the medium of art.

— explain that they have feeling responses to external events.

Materials:

several pieces of art paper and drawing tools, with a wide selection of colors for each student; a tape player and a selection of music depicting a wide range of emotions, such as:

Sadness:

"Symphony No. 5 in E Minor," Anton Dvorak
"Symphony No. 6 in B Minor," Tchaikovsky

Anger:

"Night on Bare Mountain," Modest Mossorgsky
"The Sorcerer's Apprentice," Paul A. Dukas
"The Sea (La Mer)," Claude Debussy

Happiness:

"Bolero," Maurice Ravel
"Carnival Overture," Anton Dvorak
"Nutcracker Suite," Tchaikovsky

Fear:

"Mercury" from "The Planets," Gustav Holst
"Peer Gynt," Edvard Grieg

Playful:

"Carnival of the Animals," Camille Saint-Saens

Procedure:

Announce to the students that you are going to play several different musical selections. Explain that each piece has a very different "feel" to it

(Continued)

and that, as you play a selection, you want the students to choose colors they associate with the music and express their feelings by moving the crayons (or whatever medium is being used) across the paper. Play each selection long enough for the students to respond. Have them use a new paper for each musical selection. At the conclusion of the activity, have the students write their reactions to each musical piece on the back of the corresponding drawing.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was it like to "paint" your feelings? Was it easy or difficult?
2. What are some of the feelings you experienced?
3. Did the music affect how you were feeling?
4. Can you think of other external events that affect your feelings?
5. What are some events that can make you feel happy? ...sad? ...angry?

Magic Glasses

Group Experience and Discussion

Objectives:

The students will:

- describe their perceptions when observing their environment through the filter of different feelings.
- describe how negative and/or positive feelings affect their experiences.

Materials:

dime-store eye glass frames for each student (optional)

Procedure:

Have the students break into groups of four to six. Explain that you have some magic glasses that you would like the students to try on. If you are using eye glass frames, pass them out. If not, ask the students to pretend to take a pair of glasses out of your hands and put them on. Tell the students that these are "happy glasses" and now everything they see is wonderful and joyous — the whole world is a happy place. Within their groups, have the students interact while looking through happy glasses. Allow about 3 minutes for interaction. Then, tell the students to "switch" to "angry glasses." Again allow about 3 minutes for interaction. Choose several feelings from the list below and, at about three minute intervals, have the students switch to a new feeling. End the exercise with a positive feeling.

scared	impressed	show-off	good
beautiful	shy	elated	excited
curious	confident	gloomy	brave

Additional words may be chosen from the "Vocabulary of Feelings" on page 32.

(Continued)

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Discussion Questions:

After viewing each other and the world through several "feeling glasses," ask the students to respond to these and other questions.

1. How did things appear to you when you were wearing happy glasses? ...angry glasses? ...(other feeling) glasses?
2. Do you have days when it seems like you *really are* wearing a particular pair of feeling glasses? What happens?
3. Do you know someone who seem to always wear one type of glasses? What is that person's life like?
4. What connection is there between how you view the world and the kinds of experiences you have?
5. What have you learned from this exercise?

Be Happy!

Class Discussion and Experience Sheet

Objectives:

The students will:

- interview classmates concerning what makes them happy.
- identify areas of happiness in their own lives.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk; one copy of the experience sheet, "The Keys to Happiness," for each student

Procedure:

Write the following quotation on the chalkboard. Ask a student to read it aloud.

"Most people are just about as happy as they make up their minds to be"
—Mark Twain

Facilitate discussion on the subject of happiness by asking these and other questions:

1. What do you think Mark Twain means when he says most people are as happy as they decide to be?
2. Do you agree with that thought? Why or why not?
3. What does happiness feel like inside?
4. What does happiness look like on the outside?
5. Do you think people can have control over their feelings? Explain.

At the conclusion of the discussion, have the class divide into groups of four. Pass out the experience sheet, "The Keys to Happiness," and have the students each interview two other members of their group, using the experience sheet to record responses. After giving the students time to complete the last item on the experience sheet, ask volunteers to share some of their keys to happiness with the class.

The Keys to Happiness

Experience Sheet

Interview two people. Discover 3 important things that bring happiness to each of them.

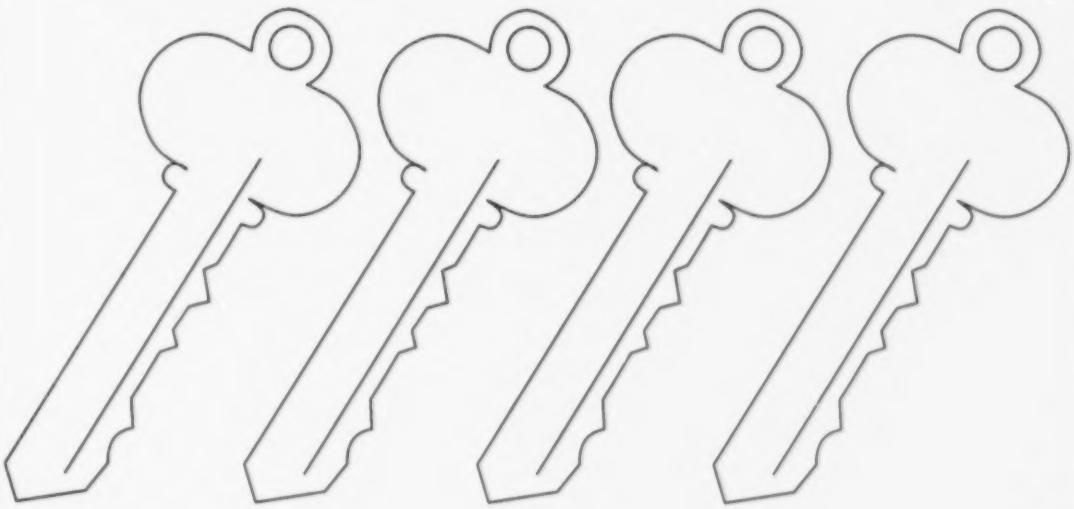
Name: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now take some time to think about what makes *you* happy. What are the keys to your happiness? Write what they are on the keys.



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What's on My Mind

A Journal of Concerns

Objectives:

The students will:

- write in a daily journal about their angers, frustrations, worries, annoyances, and general concerns.
- share selected concerns with a group and others with the teacher or counselor.

Materials:

composition books or writing paper stapled to form a journal; pencils or pens

Procedure:

Distribute composition books or hand-made journals. Tell the students to write on the front cover, "**Journal of Concerns,**" plus their names. Explain to them that a journal is a good place to express and clarify feelings, especially when those feelings and concerns relate to problems. In this journal, they will have a chance to write down their gripes, annoyances, hurts, worries, frustrations, and general concerns each day. Ask that they date each entry and record their feelings, thoughts, and details of the situations which triggered the feelings.

Explain that writing their feelings in the journal may help the students learn to deal with uncomfortable situations until a solution can be found. Channeling their concerns into writing can also help them focus on a feeling without "acting out" or "losing their temper," and can have a calming effect.

Each week, encourage the students to select one of their journal entries to share with the class. Assure the students that they do not have to share

(Continued)

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something that they would rather keep private, but explain that sharing with others may give them insights into their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Invite the students to "sign up" for an appointment with you to share one or more concerns from their journal in private. Use active listening techniques such as paraphrasing, nodding, asking questions for clarification, and maintaining eye contact. Listening alone will help you communicate acceptance and understanding of what is important to the child. Listening will also focus the attention of students on their own needs and will help them develop insights into possible problem solutions. Your listening to the students can help them develop trust in a caring adult. As that trust is built, you can work with each child on strategies for conflict resolution and anger-prevention.

Be sure to allow the students some time each day to write in their journals. If possible, continue the activity throughout the year.

The Land Remembers

Oral Reading and Discussion

Objective:

The students will explore their own feelings about death and renewal.

Materials:

The Land Remembers, Part Six: "An Ending, a Beginning," by Ben Logan.

Procedure:

Tell the students you are going to read aloud the last chapter of the book, The Land Remembers, which is entitled "An Ending, a Beginning." The book tells the story of the adolescent years of a man named Ben Logan. Suggest that the students close their eyes and imagine each scene as they listen.

Discussion Questions:

After you have finished reading the story, ask the students:

1. How did you feel at different points during the story? (As the students call out their responses, list them on the chalkboard.)
2. How was this story an ending and a beginning?
3. Why do you think Ben planted the garden?
4. When did Ben seem to accept his feelings of grief?
5. Why do people cry when they are feeling strong painful emotions like grief?

Discuss the importance of crying as a natural restorative function that helps us to resolve our hurts.

Note: Sometimes an activity of this nature will trigger expressions of grief in students. If, for example, crying occurs, demonstrate full acceptance of this natural behavior. Do not urge students to stop crying. Rather, let them know that you appreciate their demonstrations of trust in the class.

THE LAND REMEMBERS: THE STORY OF A FARM AND ITS PEOPLE

PART SIX, AN ENDING, A BEGINNING

by ***Ben Logan***

Mother died the winter I was sixteen. There was no warning. The winter, the same winter that always killed her fall flowers and sent her birds away, caused her death. She fell on the ice and broke her leg. Dr. Farrell came. He growled at her, put a cast on her leg, and told her to rest. Before his horse was out of sight, she was beginning to run the house from her bed. The door to the bedroom stayed open, and her voice carried through the house. Our voices carried back to her, so she felt a part of things.

Two weeks later she woke Father in the night, saying she felt faint. He called Dr. Farrell, but in a few minutes she was dead. The rest of us were still sleeping. Dr. Farrell said a piece of tissue had broken loose from the fracture and stopped her heart.

The weeks crept by. The hushed and whispering feel of death went away, but the house stayed quiet and empty. We would find ourselves wandering from room to room. A thousand times I started out to look for her, to tell her something, to ask her something. In the evening, at the dining-room table, one of us would suddenly raise his head from whatever he was doing and look around, still surprised to find the empty chair at the end of the table nearest the kitchen.

We could not believe she was gone. Even with the constant flow of the seasons to tell us that life is filled with endings and beginnings, there had been no preparation for life on our hilltop world without Mother.

As the winter went on, there were two things I began to dread, the next blizzard and the coming of spring. The blizzard came a month later. I woke in the night, the heavy covers pushing me down, the air in the bedroom cold on my face. Snow was whispering against the walls. The windows were rattling. That odd, deep howling of the wind was coming from the eaves along the west side of the house.

I waited, shivering. The other sound began. The piano was humming, imitating the wind. I listened and waited for the hair to rise on the back of my neck. That didn't happen. It wasn't a lonely, ghostly sound at all. I stopped shivering, pulled the covers up tight around me, and went back to sleep, thinking of her playing and singing at the piano.

The days lengthened. The snow began to melt. Easter lilies bloomed, bright yellow against the brown of last year's grass. The birds came back. The land warmed in the sun, as it had in other springs. The green came again. The silly McMahon tree bloomed on one side.

Nothing had been said about a garden. One Saturday morning at breakfast I asked Lyle to get the ground ready. Everyone stopped eating. We all looked at Father. He put his hands up to his face and didn't speak.

"All right," Lyle said. He smiled, the first one I'd seen from him in a long time. "But don't be surprised if you find a horse's head sticking in through a window. I

might as well as try to plow a postage stamp."

Father got up and started out. He came back and put his hand on my shoulder. "You want any help?"

I shook my head.

Lyle began on the garden, first a load of manure, then the walking plow. I dug through the pantry and found the cardboard box with all the packets of seeds. Mother had written little notes to herself on the envelopes which held seeds we had harvested ourselves. They all made sense but one. It said, "Try a half row, next to the larkspur. Not blue???"

I went out with the box of seeds, the string, and the garden tools just as Lyle was finishing. His face was all puckered up like he wanted to cry. He said something I couldn't understand. He turned his face away and whacked the horses with the lines. They trotted toward the barnyard, the harrow bouncing and clattering behind them.

The garden was smoother than I'd ever seen it. The moist dark soil was already warming in the sun, sending up the fresh smell that said "seedtime." Without thought, I began to follow the pattern of other years. I stretched the string across the garden, lined up with the west window on one side and the wild plum tree on the other, leaving the north end for volunteer ground cherries and tomatoes. I made a row under the string, and began to drop the seeds and cover them with moist earth.

White petals were falling from the McMahon tree. A robin was building its nest again in exactly the same place in the juniper tree. A meadow lark sang from the top of the big maple tree.

I planted radishes, lettuce, turnips, beets, beans, working my way slowly toward the south end. I didn't know yet if I was going to plant any flowers.

The soil went on warming in the sun, beginning to have a lighter color on the very top as it dried out a little. The knees on my trousers were damp. The mysterious living seeds passed through my fingers, one by one. I marked the end of each row with a stick, sometimes putting an empty seed envelope over it so I would know what was there.

I planted the peas, two rows close together, then a space and two more rows, still not knowing why we did it that way.

Finally there was only the space at the south end where the flowers had always been. I looked at it, lying smooth and undisturbed, and knew I couldn't leave it that way. I got the dry and shriveled dahlia roots and gladiolus bulbs from the cellar. Even as I put them carefully into the ground, I couldn't quite believe that life was stored in there, waiting for a chance to come out.

I began on the annual flowers, first the larkspur. Had she liked it so much because of the word "lark" in the name? I had never thought about that. I planted the half row of mystery seeds next to the larkspur, then the zinnias, nasturtiums, and cosmos. Last of all, I sprinkled the tiny black seeds of moss rose and patted them into the ground with a board.

When it was all finished, I straightened up to uncrick my muscles, putting my head way back, looking up at all the different shades of blue. Then, like Lyle, I started crying. I climbed high into the white pine tree, up to my special whorl of limbs. Curled around the trunk the way I'd done when I was younger, with the branches of the big maple tree reaching out toward me, I let go and cried for the first time without trying to stop.

I had not entirely lost her after all. The seeds germinated. Neat rows of new green pushed up in the garden.

The land remembers.

What Good Are Feelings?

Experience Sheet

Why do some feelings hurt so much?

Nobody knows the answer to that question for sure. But people have noticed that some *good* can come from painful emotions.

Let's talk about one of the most painful emotions of all — grief.

> *When Harold's father died, Harold hurt so badly inside he could hardly stand it. People had told him all his life that "men don't cry," but Harold couldn't help it. He didn't care if people thought he was a baby. He cried almost all the time for days, which seemed to Harold to last forever.*
>
> *Then one day, Harold woke up feeling different. He was still very sad, and when he thought about his love for his dad, he began to cry again. But the crying was different. It wasn't as deep. And his insides didn't hurt so much anymore.*
>
> *After that Harold felt better. He remained sad for a time, but he found that he had truly accepted his father's death. He still loved the memory of his father, and he missed him very much, but his grief had been expressed. He was through crying and ready to go on living.*

When people allow themselves to feel grief and express it by crying, they get over the grief faster. People who pretend that they don't feel grief, who hold it inside, stay sad for a very long time. Some people shut their feelings down completely and stay shut down for years — sometimes for the rest of their lives! If people don't express their grief through crying, they may never get over the hurt.

Another painful feeling is guilt. Have you ever done something you felt guilty about afterwards? Guilt makes us feel bad about ourselves, but it can also cause us to make important changes in our behavior. Here's what one person who felt guilty had to say:

I took money from another student. She knew I saw where she put it, and she asked me about it. I lied and told her I didn't know a thing about her money.

Afterward I felt rotten inside. The little bit of money I got just wasn't worth it. Stealing and lying made me lose my self-respect. I decided I'd never steal again and I'd try to be more honest. Since I made that decision, I've never stolen again. I've bent the truth, but I haven't told any lies that have caused anybody to get hurt. I feel lots better about myself now.

Take a moment to think about some other feelings. In the spaces below, describe some problems you think these feelings can cause:

Self-pity

Greed

Jealousy

Possessiveness

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That's Unfair!

Neutralizing Resentment

Objectives:

The students will:

- brainstorm enjoyable aspects of their lives.
- develop a personal poster showing the "unfair" advantages in their lives.
- practice acknowledging unfair advantages as a way of reducing pain and resentment.

Materials:

9" x 12" drawing paper (2 pieces per child); colored pencils, markers or crayons; tape; chalkboard and chalk

Procedure:

Begin by gathering the students together and asking them to brainstorm a list describing enjoyable aspects of their lives. Allow the students to contribute anything that they consider an "advantage." Suggest that they think of situations, conditions, or things that other kids in the world may not have the opportunity to enjoy, such as the positive features of their home, school, neighborhood, community, and country. Write all their responses on the board. Consider the following items when making the list; however, *include only those that are real for your students.*

- having a TV or VCR
- having caring parents
- being able to play video games
- owning a bike
- living in an area where there's snow (ocean, mountains, etc.)
- being allowed to play in Little League
- being able to participate in Scouts or other clubs
- having nice grandparents
- having a nice place to live (apartment, house)
- having a warm, comfortable bed to sleep in
- being healthy

— being able to eat yummy foods like pizza, MacDonald's burgers, cokes, popcorn, tortilla chips, etc.
— having sufficient food to eat
— having parents who are not abusive (alcoholics, criminals)
— having a computer (at home or school)
— being able to talk to friends on the phone
— being able to get a free education
— living in a country where people can voice their opinions
— living in a country where people can vote for their officials

After their ideas have been exhausted, ask the students to look at the advantages that apply to them personally. In your own words, tell them: *Having all these advantages (and more) is really unfair! In some countries the children are dying of starvation and have never attended a school or visited a doctor. Some people have never seen a telephone or radio, let alone a TV or VCR. It is unfair for you to have these things while others go without them!*

Explain that the reason you asked the students to make the list was to demonstrate that some of life's unfairness is positive. When life and/or specific events in life seem unfair, the students can help themselves by thinking of the (unfair) advantages they have. Assure the students that you do not wish to negate their hurts or discount their problems; however, you do want to show them how to ease their pain by focusing on advantages. Suggest that one way of reminding themselves of the advantages they have in life is to illustrate them in a "personal poster."

Explain that you want the students to each select 12 advantages to illustrate in a personal poster. When completed, the poster can be displayed on the wall of a bedroom or folded and kept in a notebook, giving the students something to look at when life is unfair and they need a positive boost.

Distribute two sheets of drawing paper to each student. Ask the students to divide each sheet into six equal parts by folding the long side into thirds and the short side in half. The two sheets can be attached with tape along either their short or long edges after the illustrations are finished. Ask the students to illustrate one positive aspect of their life in each of the 12 spaces. Suggest that they give their poster a title, such as "My Unfair Advantages," or "The Darling Dozen."

To summarize, repeat the idea that there exist as many positive unfairnesses as negative. When the students experience the unfair side of life, they don't always have to choose anger and resentment as a response. They can take a look at their personal poster and be reminded that they benefit from many of life's unfair advantages as well. Remind the students to balance their negative feelings by looking at their posters throughout the year.

Developing Responsible Feelings

Class Discussion and Experience Sheet

Objectives:

The students will:

- state that feelings don't just happen, they are chosen.
- explain that feelings result from a person's thoughts about a situation, rather than the situation itself.

Materials:

one copy of the experience sheet, "Take Responsibility for Your Feelings!" for each student

Procedure:

Read the following scenarios to the students. After each scenario, ask the questions provided and encourage discussion about what actually caused the feelings of the individuals involved.

Scenario #1:
Juanita is late for Betty's party. When she arrives at the party, Betty yells at Juanita for not arriving on time. Juanita feels that she's irresponsible and a bad friend.

Discussion Questions:

1. What thoughts do you think Juanita was having after Betty yelled at her?
2. What caused Juanita to feel the way she did?
3. What other thoughts could Juanita have chosen in response to Betty's anger?

Scenario #2

Jim and Bill both try out for quarterback of the school team. In the final round, Jim is selected. Bill feels inferior and rejected.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is inaccurate about Bill's thinking?
2. What else could Bill think about the situation and how would he feel about himself as a result?
3. In general, what causes people to feel the way they do, the situation or the feelings they have about the situation? Explain your answer.

When you have completed the discussion, distribute the experience sheets and ask the students to complete them. After the students have finished writing, ask volunteers to share their situations and ideas concerning how they can change their thoughts.

Take Responsibility for Your Feelings!

Experience Sheet

We all have situations and conditions in our lives that we feel negatively about. Think about a situation or condition in your life right now (or in the past) that causes you to feel *anger, disappointment, embarrassment, sadness,* or some other negative feeling. Write about the situation here. Describe what is going on and how you feel about it.

Now, take responsibility for your thoughts by changing them. What other thoughts could you have about this situation that would help you to feel better? Be understanding and compassionate with yourself, but be honest, too. (If you need more room, use the back of this sheet.)

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Positive vs. Negative

A Cooperative Game

Objectives:

The students will:

— identify fears and worries associated with specific topics.

— make decisions about how to cope with fears and worries.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and felt-tip marker

Procedure:

List the following topics on the board or chart paper:

- You are about to take an important test in your worst subject.
- Tomorrow is your first day in a new school.
- You're about to try out for the lead in the school play.
- You have to give a speech to a group of kids you don't know.
- Your family has moved to another state and you're about to see your new home for the first time.
- You are home alone at night and you hear a strange noise.

Next, divide the class into two teams and select two students to be judges (along with you). Name the teams the "Negative Thinkers" and the "Positive Thinkers." Explain that the task of the Negative Thinkers is to suggest things that might be scary, cause worry, or go wrong with each of the scenarios listed on the board. The task of the Positive Thinkers is to offer solutions to the problems suggested by the negative team. If the problem is one that has no solution, the positive thinkers must tell how to make the best of it. Encourage collaboration on both teams.

(Continued)

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Begin the game by having the negative team make a suggestion about what might go wrong with the first scenario. Then have the positive team provide a suggestion on how to solve the suggested problem. If the positive team makes a reasonable suggestion (as determined by the three judges) it gets a point. If not, the negative team gets a point. Give all team members an opportunity to suggest a problem or a solution before going on to the next scenario. Have the teams switch roles for the last three scenarios so that both teams have an opportunity to think in both positive and negative terms.

When the game is finished, encourage the students to talk about what they have learned about positive and negative thinking.

One of the Scariest Things That Ever Happened to Me

Story Writing and Role Playing

Objectives:

The students will:

- express and share anxieties and fears they have experienced.
- explore alternative means of coping with fears.

Materials:

writing materials

Procedure:

Tell the students that you would like them to write down in detail one of the scariest things that ever happened to them. Give a couple of personal examples about scary things that happened to you or to someone you know. As a pre-writing activity, ask volunteers to tell the class about a scary experience they had. Have the students entitle their story, "One of the Scariest Things That Ever Happened to Me."

On a following day, have the students read their stories to the class. Allow enough time for everyone to share. Ask questions to obtain additional details.

Divide the class into groups of six to eight. Have each group select a story written by one of its members to role play. After the stories have been selected, have each group fictionalize the account. Write the following steps on the board and have the students follow them:

1. Make up names for the characters.
2. Describe what the characters look like, their ages, how they talk, and any other important descriptive information.

(Continued)

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3. Decide from what point of view the story will be told.
4. Describe the setting in detail.
5. Explore plot alternatives and embellish the story.
6. Explore different resolutions to the problem and choose the best solution to role play.

Provide time for each group to plan and rehearse its role play and then allow each group to perform for the rest of the class. Enjoy, and applaud after each dramatization.

Discussion Questions:

After all the role plays have been performed, facilitate a discussion about fear by asking these and other questions:

1. Do you think that sometimes a fear can be caused more by our perception of an event/thing than by the event/thing itself? Explain.
2. How did it feel to talk about a scary experience?
3. What similarities did you notice about the scary things we shared? What differences?
4. What are some things we can do to overcome fears?
5. Why does it help to talk about things we are scared of?

We All Have Fears

Experience Sheet

All people have fears of one type or another. Some people are afraid of high places, others of being embarrassed. Some are afraid of death or the dark.

Below is a list of things that often scare people. Look at each item in the left-hand column and circle the number that best describes how you feel.

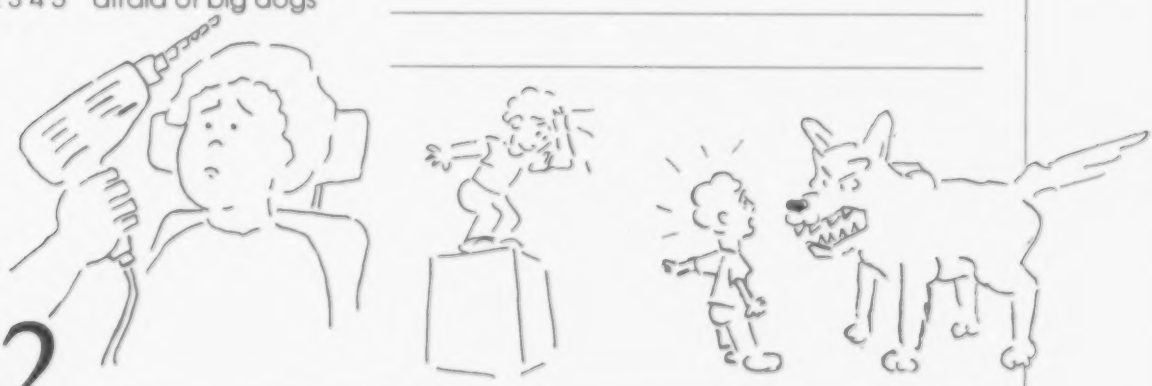
1 = not afraid.
2 = somewhat afraid
3 = afraid
4 = very afraid
5 = extremely afraid

In the right-hand column, write a suggestion to yourself about what you can do to be less afraid.

How afraid am I?		**Things I can do to be less afraid**
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of the dark	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of speaking in front of a group	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of being alone	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of strangers	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of getting poor grades	

(Continued)

How afraid am I?		Things I can do to be less afraid
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of high places	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of the dentist	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of doing something wrong	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of parents getting divorced	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of horror movies	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of being laughed at	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of being beaten up	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of fire	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of being yelled at	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of being hurt	
1 2 3 4 5	afraid of big dogs	



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Rational Fears vs. Irrational Fears

Class Discussion

Objectives:

The students will:

- verbalize some of their fears.
- distinguish between rational and irrational fears.

Materials:

writing materials for each student; chalkboard and chalk; one copy of the experience sheet, "Fear Is a Monster," for each student

Procedure:

Ask the students to take a few moments to think about some fears they have. Explain that fear is an emotion that causes distress, anxiety, or a sense of dread, and that everyone is afraid of something. As an example, tell the students about one or two things that you are afraid of. Next, ask the students to write down four or five of their fears. After everyone has finished, ask volunteers to share some of their fears. Be accepting of all contributions and don't allow any put-downs or laughing as the students share.

Explain to the students that people are wise to have some fears, because they serve as protection from harm. Fears of driving too fast and taking illegal drugs are examples of rational fears. However, some fears are irrational — they provide no self-protection and serve no useful purpose. In fact, these fears sometimes keep people from enjoying life fully and from doing things they would otherwise like to do. Fears of the dark and flying are examples of irrational fears.

(Continued)

Make two columns on the board with the headings, "Rational Fears" and "Irrational Fears." Collect the students' papers and, without indicating who's paper you are reading, call out different fears. As you read each fear, have the students decide if it is rational or irrational. Record the fear in the appropriate column.

Ask for suggestions on how to deal with some of the irrational fears listed. Next, pass out the experience sheet, "Fear Is a Monster," and give the students a few minutes to complete it.

Discussion questions:

As a conclusion, ask these and other questions:

1. How did it feel to talk about a fear?
2. How do you feel now after sharing the fear?
3. What have you learned about yourself from thinking about or sharing fears?
4. What steps can we take to overcome fears?

Fear Is a Monster

Experience Sheet

Think about times when you were afraid of someone or something, but everything turned out okay. Just as monsters aren't real, most of the time our fears aren't real either. Think of it this way:

FEAR = **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal

In the left-handed column, write about irrational fears you have had. In the right-hand column, describe what really happened.

My fear	**What really happened**

Good Tips!

Here are some things you can do to get over irrational fears:

1. Admit the fear to yourself.
2. Tell a trusted adult about your fear.
3. Keep a journal. Write about events or things that cause you fear.
4. Talk with your teacher or guidance counselor.

Writing in your journal, or sharing your fears with others can often help you get over irrational fears. But remember, changing your feelings takes time and patience.

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Fear Busters

Class Discussion and Cooperative Activity

Objectives:

The students will:

- identify specific irrational fears.
- describe steps for overcoming irrational fears.

Materials:

chalk and chalkboard; writing materials

Procedure:

Begin this activity by reminding the students that everyone has fears, but that some fears are irrational — they are built around things that pose no real threat. Sometimes fears can become a very serious problem to individuals. These extreme fears are called *phobias*. People with a serious phobia often have a problem enjoying life to the fullest because their fear keeps them from doing certain things. Mention several phobias like: *claustrophobia* — fear of small/closed places, *acrophobia* - fear of high places, etc., and explain how these phobias negatively affect people's lives. Explain that phobias like this can often be prevented if people face, understand, and use strategies to overcome their fears.

Next, ask the students to call out fears that they or others have. Write these fears on the board. After a number of fears have been listed, ask the students to form groups of four. Assign one fear to each group, and tell the groups that they are now "Fear Busters." Their job is to discuss the best way to overcome their assigned fear. Explain that you want the groups to take 10 minutes to brainstorm as many ideas as they can think of. (Remind the students that there are no bad ideas, and that all suggestions are accepted during a brainstorming session.) Have the groups record all ideas.

Finally, have the groups take another 10 minutes to go over all ideas and select the one or two methods that have the best chance of overcoming their assigned fear. At the end of the second 10 minutes, ask each group to report to the rest of the class. When all groups have shared, lead a culminating discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. What have you learned about fears from this activity?
2. Do you think there are things you can do in your life right now to overcome fear? What are they?
3. What is the meaning of the quotation, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself"?

Sequencing Anger

Moderating Thoughts to Reduce Anger

Objectives:

The students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of an anger sequence: event-thoughts-feelings.
- practice substituting moderate thoughts for angry thoughts as one way of reducing anger.

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk, writing paper, pencils

Procedure:

Tell the students that in this activity they will have an opportunity to discover a new way of handling anger. Ask them to consider that angry feelings are not actually caused by situations and events, but rather by the *thoughts* one has about those situations and events. Once the thoughts about an event (often extreme) are identified, those thoughts can be replaced with different thoughts (usually more moderate) as one way of controlling anger. Explain to the students that you are going to demonstrate this concept using a chart on the board.

Write four headings across the top of the board: **Event, Thoughts, Feelings,** and **Substitute Thoughts.** Under the **Event** column write *Mom won't let me go to the dance with my friends.* Skip the second column and ask the students what their feelings might be in this situation. The students will probably suggest words such as mad, furious, and miserable. Write several of these words in the **Feelings** column. Then go back to the **Thoughts** column, and ask the students what their thoughts might be concerning the same situation. Elicit answers such as these: *She's being mean. She doesn't understand how important it is to me. She never wants me to have fun.*

Explain to the students that it is not the event, but the *thoughts* about the event that cause the feelings. Refer to the sentences in the second column and

point out that any of these thoughts about the event could create angry feelings. Explain that no situation, event, or person *makes* us have a particular feeling. Through our thoughts, we *choose* our feelings, even if we are not aware of it.

Next, suggest that if the thoughts recorded in the second column can be moderated, the feelings too will change. Help the students create new thought statements such as: *Mom thinks she is looking out for my safety. She has family plans the night of the dance and wants me to be with the family. There will be more dances this year.* Record them in the last column, **Substitute Thoughts**. Point out that these moderated thoughts will reduce the anger.

Distribute writing paper and pencils. Ask the students to divide their paper in half lengthwise creating two columns. Have them write the heading *Event* at the top of the left-hand column and the heading *Thoughts* at the top of the right-hand column. Next, instruct the students to turn their paper over and create two more columns. Direct them to write the headings *Feelings* and *Substitute Thoughts* above the left and right columns on this side.

Under the first heading, ask the students to list three real or hypothetical situations/events in which they are certain they would feel angry. In the second column (adjacent to each description), have them write the thoughts they would have in each situation. On the other side of the paper, ask them to write down the feelings that these thoughts would create. Finally, challenge the students to come up with moderated thoughts that could be substituted for the original thoughts about the situation.

When all of the students have completed their charts, invite individuals to share one or more of their "anger sequences." After each example, ask the group how their feelings might change as a result of the substitute thoughts. Emphasize that when they find themselves reacting to a situation too strongly, the students can improve their disposition by rethinking the situation. This ability takes practice and perseverance, but it works!

Discussion Questions:

To summarize, ask the students to think about and/or respond to the following questions:

1. Why do we choose to feel angry in certain situations?
2. When you are angry, why is it important to rethink the situation?
3. What is easy about sequencing anger? What is difficult about it?

Personal Anger Scale

Experience Sheet

Becoming aware of how angry you feel in certain situations can help you deal with the feelings, manage your behaviors, and solve or cope with the problem. Below are some circumstances that may or may not make you angry.

Using the scale, rank your anger in each situation.
1-no big deal **2**-somewhat annoyed **3**-upset **4**-angry **5**-furious

___ You are walking on the school grounds when someone calls you a name that puts down your religious or ethnic heritage.

___ You are in a meeting or doing group work. One person is dominating the conversation and bossing everyone around.

___ Someone keeps telling you what to do when you already know what to do.

___ Someone yells comments to you about being overweight or underweight.

___ Everyone is talking in class but you get singled out and scolded for your behavior.

___ Someone copies your book report and turns it in as his/her own.

___ Someone makes fun of one of your family members or friends.

___ After working hard at school and team practice, you get yelled at by your parents for work you haven't finished at home.

___ Your best friend invites someone else to go with him/her to Disneyland.

___ You are in a store and the clerk keeps waiting on adults instead of you.

NOW DO THIS

On the back of this sheet write about something that *really* happened to you that made you angry.

Let's Make Up

Writing a Letter to Make It Better

Objectives:

The students will:

- practice writing a letter to someone at whom they were once angry.
- identify letter-writing as one way to deal with anger and/or resolve a conflict.

Materials:

one copy per student of the worksheet, "Make It Better Letter," and pencils

Procedure:

Introduce the activity by pointing out that friends and family members sometimes have misunderstandings and conflicts. When they do, all parties experience some kind of anger, and often someone has to apologize before feelings are soothed.

Explain that, in this activity, the students will learn to write a letter using a form which can help them express their feelings, thoughts, and desires. It is a letter in which no one is blamed or humiliated. Honest feelings are expressed in a non-threatening way. The students can use this letter as a pattern to follow when they experience a conflict with another person and feelings are so strong that the parties cannot face or speak to each other.

Distribute the experience sheets, "Make It Better Letter." Ask the students to think of a time when they were really mad at another person — so mad that they couldn't speak to the person. If the students don't remember such an incident, ask that they make up a life-like situation in which they are in conflict with another person. Help the students recall the details of

(Continued)

their situation by suggesting that they think about what happened, who was involved, what their first feelings were, why they were angry, and what they wanted.

Guide the students through parts of the letter. Ask that they fill in a real or fictitious name in the greeting.

- In the first sentence, have the students write down what they were angry about.
- In the second sentence, have them write down any initial feelings they felt before becoming angry. (See "First Feelings" activity.)
- The third sentence tells what the student was thinking in the situation that produced the anger. (See "Sequencing Anger" activity).
- Sentence four describes a fear the student had about what happened or might happen.
- In the fifth sentence, the students write what they are truly sorry about. Emphasize that they are not necessarily making an apology. They are simply explaining why they feel sorry.
- The sixth sentence expresses a wish or desire.

The last two sentences are acknowledgments of the other person. They convey what the writer appreciates in that person and what the other person means to the writer.

After the students have completed their letters, suggest that they use them as a pattern for a letter that they can use in real situations to deal with anger and/or resolve conflict. Explain that the letter need not be sent to the other person. It is mainly a way to clarify the writer's thoughts and feelings and reduce anger and stress.

Make It Better Letter

Experience Sheet

Use this pattern to write a letter to someone with whom you are angry. Writing this type of letter will help you clarify your thoughts and feelings. It will also help you reduce anger and stress — even if you never send the letter.

Date

Dear _____,

I'm very angry that

What happened made me think that

I am (was) afraid that

I am sorry that

All I really want(ed) is (was)

I appreciate

Thank you for

Sincerely,

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First Feelings

Looking at Anger as a Secondary Emotion

Objectives:

The students will:

- identify feelings that typically precede/precipitate anger and identify ways to deal with these feelings.
- practice acceptable ways to express "first feelings."

Materials:

chalkboard and chalk; one copy of the sheet, "Dealing with Anger" for each student

Procedure:

Introduce this activity by explaining that anger is a normal emotion, experienced by everyone. However, anger tends to be a *secondary* emotion. In other words, one or more *other* feelings usually precede anger. Give the students an example, such as: *You forget to study for a test and fail it. Because the test covered a subject in which you usually do well, you feel disappointed and frustrated. However, those first feelings quickly turn to anger. Before you know it, anger is the only feeling that you are aware of and the only one other people observe in you.*

Continue by introducing a second and related concept: Other people usually have difficulty coping with our anger. If our behavior becomes volatile and aggressive when we are angry, we cause others to feel threatened and maybe even to get angry in return. Other people have an easier time responding to our initial feeling of disappointment, frustration, embarrassment, grief, or fear. Consequently, a valuable skill to develop is the skill of identifying and expressing our initial feelings, rather than just our anger.

Brainstorm some initial emotions that often precede anger and write them on the board. They can include feelings such as sadness, grief, frustration, embarrassment, relief, shock, disappointment, and confusion. Then ask the students to suggest acceptable ways of expressing these feelings that others can identify with.

Distribute the experience sheet, "Dealing with Anger." Explain to the students that they will read several scenarios in which anger is preceded by other emotions. Their task is to identify the "other emotions" and suggest ways in which they can be appropriately expressed. Read and discuss the first scenario together as guided practice. If you feel that the students have a good understanding of the concepts, allow them to do the rest of the experience sheet individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Discussion Questions:

When the students have finished the sheet, gather the whole group together to discuss the other scenarios. Summarize this activity with a few thinking questions such as these:

1. How does anger mask what is really going on inside someone?
2. Why is anger so difficult to deal with in other people?
3. What are some initial feelings that often precede anger?
4. What are some ways in which we can express our first feelings?

Dealing with Anger

Experience Sheet

Read the following scenarios carefully and answer the questions.

Scenario 1:
Maria was one of the best players on the hockey team. She really wanted to be captain the coming semester and had more than just a good chance of being elected. Her teammates liked and respected her and she got along well with her coach. Maria knew that her grades had to stay above a C and she struggled to keep her Social Studies grade up. Poor reading skills kept her from doing very well. When she took her final Social Studies test before semester's end, she thought she had done OK. When report cards came out, however, she saw a "D" in Social Studies. During hockey practice after school, Maria announced that she didn't want to be captain of the team. When her friends asked her why she had changed her mind, Maria snapped at them and said, "Who wants to be captain of this stupid team, anyway? I have better things to worry about than keeping you all in line."

Questions:

- What were Maria's initial feelings?
- How did she express these feelings?
- How could Maria have better expressed her emotions?

Scenario 2:

Nate came to school ready for a fight. The night before, his cat Blackie was run over by a car and killed. Nate's friend, James, greeted him with a friendly punch, "What's up, Dude?" Nate didn't respond. He just bit his lip. James punched him a little harder and said, "What's the matter? You too good for me today?" At that, Nate went ballistic and started screaming at James, "Can't you keep your hands to yourself? You think you own the place!"

Questions:

- What were Nate's first feelings before he lost his temper?
- How did he express his emotions?
- How could he have expressed his first feelings?

Scenario 3:

Marianne went with her class to a five-day outdoor education camp. She had never been away from home before. The first night, the counselor said that she would tell the girls a ghost story after they were all in their bunks. Marianne started shaking. "I hate ghost stories. They're dumb," she protested before the story began. All the other girls called out that they wanted to hear the story. As the counselor began talking, Marianne kept interrupting with comments like "This is so stupid," "Can I go to the bathroom?" and "Why do I have to listen to this?" Then she began coughing so loudly that the counselor had to stop the story.

Questions:

- What were Marianne's first feelings, before she started objecting to the story?
- How did she express her emotions?
- How could she have better expressed these feelings?

What's Your Bag of Tricks?

Anger Control Strategies

Objectives:

The students will:

- brainstorm strategies for controlling anger.
- field test three to five anger control strategies over a given period of time.
- report back to the group concerning the effectiveness of the selected strategies.

Materials:

chalk and chalkboard, 3" x 5" cards, and pencils

Procedure:

Lead a group discussion on what happens when people lose their tempers. Talk about the destructiveness of volatile behaviors and how lack of self-control can increase stress and make a conflict or problem worse. Allow the students to share examples of what happens when someone loses self-control.

Explain to the students that, although effective solutions to conflicts and problems often require communication, negotiations with others, and long-term effort, it is sometimes necessary to gain control of ourselves before attempting such strategies. Instead of throwing tantrums and venting anger in other destructive ways, we can use "anger control strategies" to put a "band aid" on a bad situation until we have calmed down enough to work on positive solutions to the problem.

On the chalkboard, write the heading, **Anger Control Strategies**. Ask the students to brainstorm positive ways in which they can regain self-control when they feel themselves getting angry. Write their ideas on the board as they are suggested. The following items may be included as anger control strategies:

- Run laps around the house (block, school, track).
- Leave the situation and take ten slow, deep breaths.
- Jump on a trampoline or tumbling mat (or with a jump rope).
- Punch a pillow, mattress, or punching bag.
- Look away and/or walk away from the cause of stress.
- Go get a drink of water, milk, or juice.
- Listen to soft music.
- Talk to a trusted adult.
- Throw balls at a wall or rocks at a tin can (away from people).
- Count to a hundred (or backwards from 100).
- Take a walk outside and observe nature.
- Take a nap.

After the students have brainstormed ideas and you have added items from the above list, go through all the items and ask the students to think of the pros and cons of using each strategy. Next, invite the students to choose 3 to 5 anger control strategies to try out for themselves. Suggest that they include strategies that they have already found successful and new ones that they believe might be beneficial.

Give each student a 3" x 5" card, and ask the students to write down their chosen strategies. Tell them to call the list their, "Bag of Tricks." Explain to the students that their task is to "field test" their Bag of Tricks over the next few weeks, trying each strategy in several situations. Ask the students to carry their card with them to serve as a reminder. Suggest that they mark the strategies that worked best for them and jot notes on the back of the card. Alert the students that some strategies may work in one situation and not others, and strategies that work for one person may not work for another. Each "Bag of Tricks" will become individualized with time and practice.

Each week ask volunteers to report on their Bag of Tricks. Frequently remind the students that anger control strategies are just short term controls, not permanent solutions to big problems. As field-test data is brought in and shared, summarize the information on a big chart. Eventually the students will be able to see graphically which strategies work best. Post the chart in the room.

Literature Connection

Good literature has always had an impact on people, and it can influence children and young adults in ways that real life experiences cannot. As children read stories about people in their age group who must tackle problems and deal with feelings and behaviors, many will identify with the characters and their struggles. A young reader can ride through the storm of a book's plot in the shoes of the protagonist, transcending time and space, and all without the threat of physical or emotional harm. Vicariously experiencing traumas, feelings, and obstacles through the story line of a novel can be a safe, indirect way of developing the skills to cope with real feelings and resolve real problems.

Besides reading independently, children enjoy listening while others do the reading. No one is too old to be read to. The shared moments that adults and children experience when they read good stories together are often deeply treasured by both parties. Whether the adult reads aloud or the child and adult alternate reading, the special bond that is created between them can become a powerful tool for human understanding and communication.

In this section, you will find an annotated bibliography of literature intended to assist you in choosing a good book to share with your students. This list represents a small sampling of the volumes of fine literature in print today. A library with good children's and young adult sections can provide you with a plethora of novels addressing every problem, age group, race, socioeconomic level, and setting you can possibly imagine. Ask the librarian for assistance in choosing the best book for your situation. She or he has a wealth of knowledge about novels for children and adolescents.

Once a book is selected, you and your students can read it together with no activity other than the natural dialogue that springs from the reading.

Or you can engage in one or more of the following activities to stimulate soul searching, communication, critical thinking, and understanding. Either way, the use of literature is sure to stimulate personal and interpersonal growth in all who participate.

***NOTE**: The addition of any of these activities can be detrimental to a child's enjoyment of literature if overused or combined with too many of the other activities.* Exercise discretion in choosing appropriate activities and resist crossing the line into "overkill." Activities are tools for understanding and should not be used to coerce students to levels of insight for which they are not ready or to batter a good piece of literature to death.

Literature-Based Activities

Open Mind: This activity assists the student to analyze a character at a given point in the story. The student draws an outline of a head on a piece of paper (or in a journal). The head represents the mind of a character. Inside the head outline, the student draws symbols or pictures of the character's thoughts and feelings at a certain point in the story. In other words, the student shows in pictures his/her understanding of what's going on in the mind of that character at that time. After completing their drawings, the students explain their choice of symbols either in writing or discussion. This activity can be used to explore a single character's mind during each of several events in the story, or to analyze the minds of two or more different characters at critical plot junctures.

Double-Entry Journal: This activity allows the student to interact personally with the literature in a non-threatening way. The student uses a composition book or pages of writing paper stapled together to create a journal. Each page is divided into two columns, either with a pencil line or by folding the page down the middle. On the left side, the student writes a quotation from the story, self-selected or chosen by the adult. The quotation should be one that stimulates thoughts or feelings, gives insight, or illuminates a situation. In the right-hand column, the student writes a response to the quotation on the left. The student may explore the quotation's theme further, reflect on its meaning, or express his/her feelings in response to the words. Double entry writing can continue as the student progresses through the story.

Dialogue Box: This activity helps to clarify the interaction between two characters in conflict. A piece of paper, or journal page, is divided into two columns. Each column is labeled with the name of a character from

the story. The student begins by writing in the left column something that the first character *might* say to the second about what is going on between them in the story. In the right column, the student records an imagined response from the second character. This response is followed by a question (still in the right column) from the second character to the first. Then the student writes a response to that question in the left column from the point of view of the first character. The imagined dialogue continues until the student has finished exploring his/her ideas concerning the thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviors of the two characters in the conflict.

Hot Seat: Your students can learn to identify with story characters and understand their points of view through role play. In this activity, students volunteer to assume the personae of the characters in a story by sitting in front of the group and answering questions as if they really were the chosen characters. Members of the "audience" pose questions pertaining to the events of the story and thoughts and feelings of the characters. The students who are sitting in the "Hot Seats" must remain "in character" at all times and answer the questions from the perspective of the identified characters.

Tableau: Visualizing and posing in a "snapshot" of a critical scene in a story assists students to discern the scene's meaning and interpret its events. This process also helps to draw students into a story. Students visualize a scene and then pose in a frozen moment from the scene, assuming the positions, gestures, and facial expressions of the story's characters. A leader (student or adult) circulates through the frozen scene and stops behind one player at a time and taps that person on the shoulder. The player who has been tapped responds by saying what he or she believes the character is thinking and feeling at that moment.

Problem-Solution: This activity can be done as a part of a "Story Map" in which the setting and characters are listed, followed by the events in the story (written as problem-solution events), or it can stand alone as a representation of the story plot. Students divide a paper into two vertical columns and write "Problem" at the top of the left column and "Solution" at the top of the right. Most stories are a series of events in which there is a problem followed by a solution. Therefore, students list all of the problem events in the left column and the solutions to each event in the right column. This exercise can be followed by a discussion focusing on the most appropriate, effective, and long lasting solutions.

Bibliography

Intermediate Grades (3-5)

Paterson, Katherine, *Bridge to Terebithia,* illustrated by Donna Diamond, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.

Ten-year-old Jess becomes friends with Leslie, a newcomer to his fifth-grade class who starts off the school year by beating all the boys in their daily running races. When Leslie meets an untimely death trying to reach their hideaway in a storm, Jess has to cope with his feelings of guilt and grief.

Little, Jean, *From Anna,* illustrated by Joan Sandin, HarperCollins, 1972.

Nine-year-old Anna Solden and her family leave fascist Germany for Canada in 1933. Dubbed "Awkward Anna" by her siblings, she cannot read and write. It's not until a Canadian doctor examines her that her family realizes she is seriously sight impaired. She is finally helped by a supportive teacher and classmates when placed in a special sight-saving class.

Giff, Partricia Reilly, *Fourth-Grade Celebrity,* illustrated by Leslie Morrill, Delacorte, 1981.

Casey Valentine is delighted to get herself selected as fourth grade class president, then decides she must make herself a celebrity in order to outshine her older sister.

Giff, Patricia Reilly, *Love, From the Fifth-Grade Celebrity,* illustrated by Leslie Morrill, Dell/Yearling, 1986.

Casey Valentine is entering the fifth grade and sure she will be elected class president for the second year in a row. However, her good friend Tracy moves to town and wins the election, steals her friends and embarrasses Casey by telling about the dumb things she did the previous summer. Casey is consumed by jealousy and feelings of rejection, but she and Tracy work it out in the end.

Blume, Judy, *Iggie's House,* Dell/Yearling, 1970.

Winnie's best friend, Iggie, moves to Tokyo. Then a Black family, the Garbers, moves into Iggie's house, creating a stir of racism in the neighborhood. But Winnie becomes a welcoming committee of one and some neighbors decide to take action.

Lord, Bette Bao, *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson,* illustrated by Marc Simont, Harper & Row, 1984.

The story, set in 1947, is about a young Chinese immigrant, Shirley Temple Wong, who finds it difficult to adjust to her new life until she discovers baseball and her hero, Jackie Robinson, the star of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Smith, Doris Buchanan, *A Taste of Blackberries,* illustrated by Charlie Robinson, Crowell, 1973.

Two boys are best friends. Jamie is a joker who has the habit of pretending and never knowing when to quit. When he pokes a stick into a hole of bees, Jamie falls down and all his friends think he's pretending again, but this time he isn't. His best friend must deal with his sudden death.

Carrick, Carol, *The Accident,* illustrated by Donald Carrick, Clarion, 1976.

After his dog is accidentally hit by a truck and killed, Christopher must deal with his own feelings of depression, guilt, and anger. With the help of a caring father, he processes his grief.

Byars, Betsy, *Midnight Fox*, illustrated by Ann Grifalconi, Viking, 1968.

Tommy is a fearful young boy whose parents send him to his uncle's farm for the summer. His misery turns to admiration and love for a black fox he sees on the farm, which drives him to free the fox from his uncle's trap, leaving him with mixed feelings: happiness for the fox and guilt about disobeying his uncle.

Byars, Betsy, *The Pinballs*, Harper & Row, 1977.

Three lonely and alienated children are thrown together in a foster home. Harvey's drunken father ran over him with a car and broke both his legs, and Carlie and Thomas J. figure that they are all pinballs: they don't get to settle where they want to, but they eventually find love and caring with each other and their new foster parents.

Martin, Ann, *Stage Fright*, illustrated by Blanche Sims, Holiday House, 1984.

Learning that her 4th grade class is putting on a play terrifies Sara, who is painfully shy and depends upon her bouncy friend, Wendy. However, she does manage her few lines and learns that, with real effort, she can overcome her shyness one day.

Cleary, Beverly, *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky, Morrow, 1983.

This Newberry Award book tells the story of a fourth-grade boy, Leigh Botts, who aspires to be a writer when he grows up, so he writes regularly to an author and then writes in a journal about his parents' divorce, a move to a new school, and the daily disappearance of goodies from his lunch.

Spinelli, Jerry, *Fourth Grade Rats*, illustrated by Paul Casale, Scholastic, 1991.

Suds Morton, who liked being called a "Third Grade Angel" last year is faced with a dilemma. Should he now live up to the school-yard chant and act like a "Fourth Grade Rat"? The story is his dilemma and how he solves it.

Adler, C.S., *Good-bye Pink Pig*, Putnam, 1985.

Because it is difficult to face the reality of a new school, shy Amanda retreats into a fantasy involving a miniature rose quartz pig. She confides in the pig until she is given attention by the school custodian, who turns out to be her grandmother. With Pearly's help, Amanda begins to face the real world and make her own decisions.

George, Jean Craighead, *The Missing 'Gator of Gumbo Limbo*, HarperCollins, 1992.

Liza K. and her mother leave home to escape an abusive father and find shelter in Gumbo Hammock in the Florida Everglades. They are befriended by a naturalist, a homeless poet, and a would-be singer who all work together to save the local alligator and the environment of the hammock.

Slote, Alfred, *Rabbit Ears*, Lippincott, 1982.

Tip O'Hara is kicked out of a Little League baseball game when he cannot block out the insults from the crowd while pitching. His younger brother persuades him to join his rock band, which relaxes him enough to return to pitching for his team.

Sachs, Marilyn, *Secret Friend*, Scholastic 1978/1987.

Jessica had always been best friends with Wendy until suddenly Wendy didn't cooperate or want anything to do with her anymore. The story emphasizes the responsibilities of true friendship and personal growth.

Fisher, Lois I., *Wretched Robert,* Dodd, Mead, 1985.

Robert is a "nice boy" whom everybody likes, and this gets on his nerves. He makes up his mind, as the result of reading the dictionary, to be a wretched boy but discovers, after a series of misadventures, that "wretched" also means "miserable."

Upper Grades (6-8)

Hermes, Patricia, *Friends Are Like That,* Harcourt, 1984.

This story presents 13-year-old Tracy who is pressured by her new friends to drop her old unconventional friend in order to stay in the popular crowd. It's a funny but sad tale of growing up and having to make decisions about friendship.

Gilson, Jamie, *Do Bananas Chew Gum?* , Lothrup, Lee & Shephard, 1980.

Sixth-grader Sam Mott is convinced he's dumb because he can't read or spell, but with the support of a new friend, Alicia, and Mrs. Glass, for whom he baby-sits, he takes the test which reveals his learning disabilities.

Roos, Stephen, *Fair-Weather Friends,* illustrated by Dee deRosa, Atheneum, 1987.

Twelve-year-old Kit and her good friend Phoebe are only six months apart in age, but when they meet at their respective summer homes it is as though years separate them. The painful adjustments to adolescence and changes in friendship are dealt with in this story.

Byars, Betsy, *The Eighteenth Emergency,* Viking/Penguin, 1973.

Benjie "Mouse" Fawley is fleeing from the toughest kid in the school after writing Marv's name under a Neanderthal man on a school chart. His best friend, Ezzie, has come up with sure-fire solutions to 17 emergencies, like how to survive attacks of stampeding elephants and hungry crocodiles, but has no solution for this 18th emergency!

Crew, Linda, *Children of the River,* Delacorte Press, 1989.

Seventeen-year-old Sundara fled Cambodia with her aunt's family four years earlier to escape the Khmer Rouge army, leaving behind her parents, brother and sister, and the boy she loved as a child. Now she is torn between the decision to remain faithful to her own people or adjust to life in her Oregon high school as a "regular" American.

Taylor, Theodore, *The Cay,* Doubleday, 1969.

After the Germans torpedoed the boat on which Phillip and his mother were travelling during World War II, Phillip found himself blind and stranded on a small Caribbean island with a black islander named Timothy. This is the story of their survival and of Phillip's efforts to understand the dignified, wise, and loving old man whom he had hated because of his race and culture.

Hamilton, Virginia, *Zeely,* illustrated by Symeon Shimin, Macmillan, 1967.

Eleven-year-old Geeder Perry finds in an old magazine a portrait of a Watutsi queen and decides that Zeely Tayber, who is six-and-a-half feet tall, thin and deeply dark as ebony, must be a queen, too. Zeely helps bring Geeder back to reality and they become friends with much in common.

Byars, Betsy, *The Burning Questions of Bingo Brown,* Viking Kestrel, 1988.

The joys and problems of the average 12-year-old boy are revealed in this story: girls, school assignments, and hair styles, but also the influence he has on a suicidal teacher. Light, humorous, and serious, the story builds to the attempted suicide and the value Bingo finds in himself and life which in turn helps his teacher understand.

George, Jean Craighead, *My Side of the Mountain*, Dutton, 1959, and *On the Far Side of the Mountain*, Dutton, 1990.

Both books are about a nature-loving boy who leaves home to live off the land. He shows courage and resourcefulness and learns many lessons in survival, as does his younger sister, Alice, in the second book.

Cleaver, Vera and Bill, *Where the Lilies Bloom*, illustrated by Jim Spanfeller, Lippincott, 1969.

This book introduces a young Appalachian Mountain girl named Mary Call who is charged by her tenant-farmer father on his deathbed to take care of her siblings and to see that they are not sent to the county charity home. She conceals his death from the neighbors and solves many problems in this moving story of survival, responsibility, and love.

O'Dell, Scott, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

This book tells about a 12-year-old Indian girl who made a critical decision to jump ship and swim back to her island to rescue her little brother and became marooned on the California island for 18 years. Based on actual fact, the story tells of the many decisions Karana has to make to survive alone.

Hamilton, Virginia, *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, Macmillan, 1974.

This Newberry Award book is about Mayo Cornelius Higgins, a boy living in the hills who thinks that the only escape for himself and his family is to flee the hills. When two strangers enter his world, he learns that he has the power of choice and action to keep his family safe.

Hall, Elizabeth, *Stand Up Lucy*, illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush, Houghton Mifflin, 1971.

This historical novel tells about a spirited young girl in the early 1900's who rallies to the issue of women's suffrage through the influence of her mysterious Aunt Leticia.

Paterson, Katherine, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, Crowell, 1978.

This Newberry Honor book tells about a bright 11-year-old girl named Gilly who is rebellious, manipulative, and hostile as a result of being abandoned at age three by her young mother. But the influence of her newest foster mother, Maime Trotter, who pours out such unstinting love, breaks down Gilly's defenses and helps her to decide to make her life different.

Fisher, Lois I., *Rachel Vellars, How Could You?*, Dodd, Mead, 1984.

A shy new sixth-grade girl, Cory Matthewson, makes friends with a social outcast and then is under pressure to decide whether or not to stand by her around the other girls.

Danziger, Paula, *The Cat Ate My Gym Suit*, Delacourte, 1974.

Marcy Lewis is bored by school, tryannized by her father, plagued by excess weight and other problems of adolescence. Along comes a new English teacher with controversial teaching methods, and Marcy helps to organize support for her, creating more problems for herself, but learning the importance of fighting for her values.

Paulsen, Gary, *Canyons*, Delacorte, 1990.

Two boys are vastly separated by time and culture but make a strong spiritual connection. One is a young Apache named Coyote Runs who lived over a hundred years ago, and the other is a contemporary teenager who discovers the remains of a human skull while on a camping trip and realizes that he has a moral and spiritual imperative to right an ancient wrong regarding Coyote Runs.

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